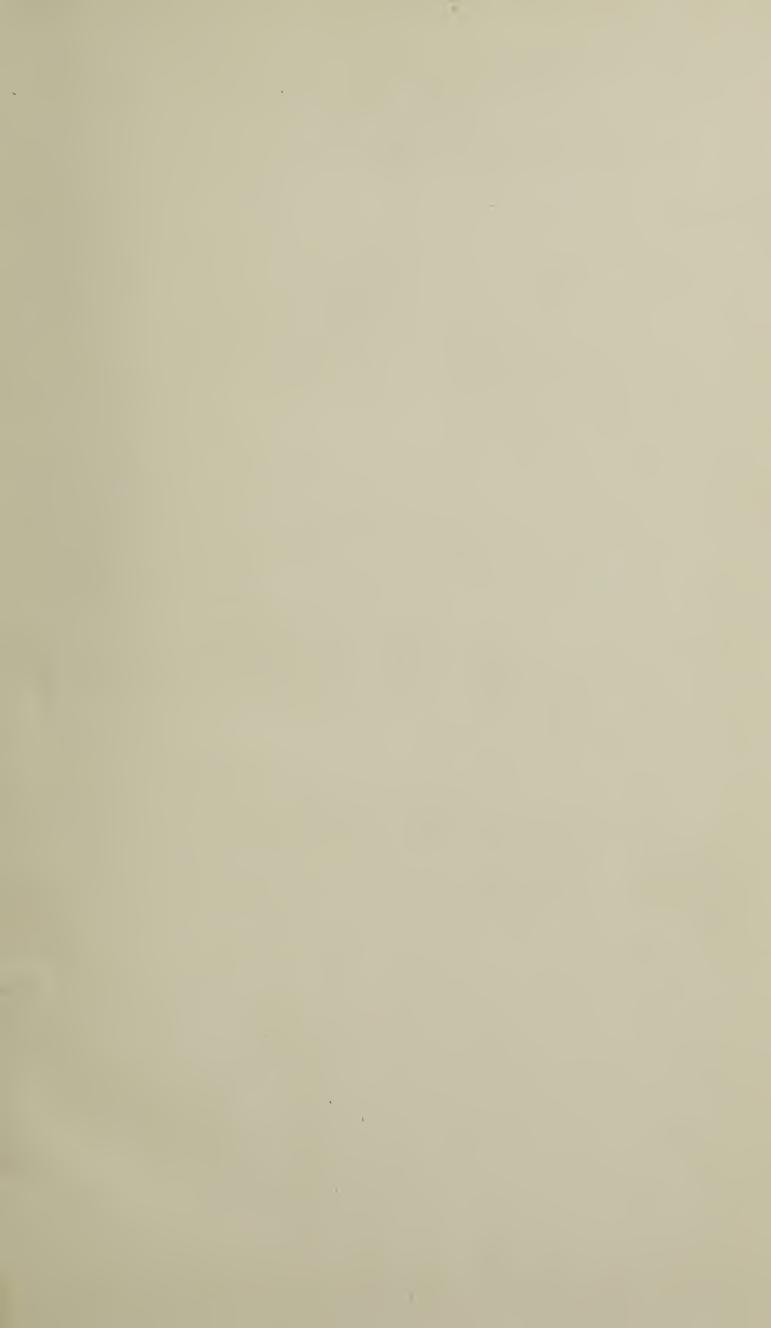




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Franciscan essays





BRITISH SOCIETY OF FRANCISCAN STUDIES

EXTRA SERIES VOL. III.

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II



BY

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WITH

A PREFATORY NOTE
ON THE HISTORY AND WORK OF THE SOCIETY

MANCHESTER: THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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A NOTE ON THE HISTORY AND WORK OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY OF FRAN-CISCAN STUDIES.

The first volume of Franciscan Essays by Paul Sabatier and others was issued in 1912, and has for many years been out of print. Twenty years is a long time to wait for the second volume, but it will be remembered that a larger collection of the same kind was edited by Dr. Walter Seton in 1926, under the title St. Francis of Assisi 1226-1926: Essays in Commemoration. The Society in the meantime concentrated on the publication of original texts and more detailed studies. It may be of interest to give some account of its history and work.

The Society has now been in existence for thirty years. was originally founded on 29 September, 1902, as the British Branch of the International Society of Franciscan Studies in Assisi, the parent society having been established by Paul Sabatier in July of the same year. The prime movers were the Rev. Professor W. E. Collins, who became the first chairman, and the Rev. the Hon. James Adderley, who became the first hon. secretary and treasurer—Sabatier being hon. president both of the International Society and of the British Branch. Dr. Collins was, however, appointed Bishop of Gibraltar in 1903, and Mr. Adderley left London in 1905. They were succeeded by Mr. A. G. Little as chairman, and Mr. Paul Descours as hon. secretary and treasurer. The objects of the Branch were to promote research especially among manuscript sources in the United Kingdom, to spread information by lectures and publications with regard to St. Francis and Franciscan movements generally, to form a lending library, and to help members who visit the scenes of the life of St. Francis to know where to go

and what to see. The minimum subscription was 2s. 6d. a year. The members in 1904 numbered 81.

In spite of its meagre resources, the Branch was very active. It published six "occasional papers" besides a catalogue of the library, and held a dozen meetings between 1903 and 1906. Some of the papers read were printed as occasional papers; others appeared separately or in periodicals or as parts of larger works-such as Ann Macdonell's Ste. Donceline, W. E. Collins' "Franciscan Missions in China," Beryl de Selincourt's Homes of the Early Franciscans, and Reginald Balfour's Seraphic Keepsake. One ambitious project, the compilation of a catalogue of Franciscan manuscripts, remained unaccomplished, notwithstanding an enthusiastic welcome by Sabatier, but out of it grew A. G. Little's Initia Operum Latinorum, which was originally undertaken as a preliminary to the drawing up of a catalogue of Franciscan manuscripts in Great Britain. In or about these years many of the primitive Franciscan legends were translated. into English by members and published (in some cases "under the auspices of the British Branch "), such as T. W. Arnold's Little Flowers of St. Francis, Miss E. G. Salter's Legend of the Three Companions, and Life of St. Francis by St. Bonaventura, and A. G. Ferrers Howell's Lives of St. Francis by Bro. Thomas of Celano.

It was, however, obvious that with a subscription of 2s. 6d. a year no serious independent publications could be undertaken. In 1907 it was decided after a good deal of discussion to reconstruct the Branch as the British Society of Franciscan Studies, with a minimum subscription of 10s. 6d., and to concentrate on editing and issuing texts and studies illustrative of Franciscan history and the religious life and thought of the Middle Ages. The new rules were adopted at a general meeting held at Toynbee Hall on 2 November, 1907. The more popular side of the movement was recognised by the provision of public lectures, and the admission of associates at an annual subscription of 2s. 6d. Sabatier remained hon. president, and several members of the old committee continued to serve. The change was immediately justified by a slight increase in the number of members, and by the fact that subscribing libraries began to come in.

These had increased to 60 by 1922. In the first eight years of the new Society's existence (1908-1915) seven volumes were issued to subscribers, and this rate has been maintained, apart from some slackening during the war. The Society has now (1922) issued twenty volumes.¹

Mr. Descours died in 1923, after twenty years' devoted service to the Society as hon. secretary and treasurer. He was succeeded by Dr. Walter Seton, who had joined the Society in 1911, and became a member of the committee in 1914. Dr. Seton's short tenure of office (1923-1926) was memorable in the annals of the Society. The number of members increased from 112 to 170, and of subscribing libraries from 60 to 73. Dr. Seton also set on foot the performances of the Little Plays of St. Francis which have been given each year since 1926 with remarkable success by the University College Dramatic Society. The idea was suggested by a reading of some of the Little Plays which Mr. Laurence Housman gave to the Society on 9 November, 1923.

Two commemorations were held in this period. On 10 September, 1924, the seventh centenary of the coming of the Franciscans to England (10 September, 1224), was celebrated at Canterbury. This was organized by a local committee, with Canon Mason as chairman, under the auspices of the Dean and Chapter. The commemoration sermon was preached by Dr. W. H. Frere, Bishop of Truro, who had been a member of our committee since the beginning, and addresses in the nave of the cathedral were given by Paul Sabatier on "Le message de Saint François, a-t-il application à nos jours," and by A. G. Little on "Some Recent Researches in Franciscan History." Dr. Cotton's Grey Friars of Canterbury was issued this year as a contribution to this centenary.

In October, 1926, the seventh centenary of the death of St. Francis was commemorated by a course of lectures arranged by the Society in co-operation with the department of Italian at

¹ The writers who have contributed to these volumes are: H. M. Bannister, A. F. Claudine Bourdillon, C. Cotton, Father Cuthbert, Margaret Deanesly, Father E. B. Fitzmaurice, E. G. Gardner, J. P. Gilson, H. E. Goad, M. R. James, C. L. Kingsford, A. G. Little, H. Rashdall, Father P. Robinson, P. Sabatier, Emma Gurney Salter, W. W. Seton, Dorathea E. Sharp, F. Tocco, Margaret Toynbee, Evelyn Underhill, E. Withington.

University College, London. These lectures, with some other papers, were published in St. Francis of Assisi, Essays in Commemoration 1226-1926, edited by Dr. Walter Seton, with an Introduction by Professor Sabatier (University of London Press, 1926).

Dr. Seton's death at the early age of 44, on 26 January, 1927, was an irreparable loss to the Society. Mr. R. Butlin, who Dr. Seton had hoped would eventually succeed him, was asked to act as secretary; he found the demands of his academic studies too heavy to permit him to give enough time to the affairs of the Society, and most of the administrative work was ably carried on by Miss M. Oldham, who had been Dr. Seton's private secretary, till the Rev. H. Kingsford was appointed hon. secretary and treasurer in 1930.

Another heavy loss was suffered by the Society through the death of Sabatier on 4 March, 1928. Dr. Little was elected hon. president in 1930, while continuing to act as chairman of committee and hon. general editor.

Meetings of the Society were in early years generally held in private houses or at Toynbee Hall: a notable one in 1909 was held in the Jerusalem Chamber by invitation of the Dean of Westminster (Dr. J. Armitage Robinson): then the rooms of the Royal Historical Society became the usual place for meetings, by kind permission of the president and council: and latterly, after Dr. Seton became secretary, they have been held at University College. Except during the war, two lectures a year have been given, till 1931. But various circumstances have combined to make it very difficult to ensure adequate audiences—such as the increasing proportion of libraries to members, and the fact that our members are scattered over the world, and comparatively few live in London. It has therefore been decided to have only occasional meetings. Their place is to some extent taken by the Walter Seton Memorial Lectures on subjects connected with St. Francis: the first of these was given by Captain Goad, in January, 1929 (University of London Press), the second by Professor Burkitt is printed in this volume.

A list of publications is printed in every volume issued by the Society, but some classification of them may be of interest.

Primitive legends are represented by the Speculum Perfectionis (xiii and xvii), and "Description of a Franciscan MS. formerly in the Phillipps Library" (v); the early friars by "Brother William of England" (v); Agnes of Bohemia (vii), and Giles of Assisi (viii); the history of English Franciscan houses by the Grey Friars of London (vi, x); Grey Friars of Canterbury (Extra Ser. ii); and the Minoresses in England (xii); to which may be added "Records of the Franciscan Province of England" (v); and the Franciscan Province of Ireland (ix). Famous English Franciscan thinkers are commemorated in Pecham's Tractatus tres de paupertate (ii); Roger Bacon's Compendium Studii Theologiæ, Opus Tertium, and Opuscula de rebus Medicinalibus (iii, iv, xiv); and in Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford in the Thirteenth Century (xvi). Learning and libraries are treated in articles by M. R. James and H. M. Bannister (v, x): preaching and popular devotion in the Liber Exemplorum (i), and the "Gospel Harmony of John de Caulibus' (x). "Friar Alexander and his historical interpretation of the Apocalypse" (x); St. Louis of Toulouse (xv); and Nicholas Glassberger (xi), deal with yet other aspects of Franciscan activity and influence on the continent.

During the last few years, while subscribing libraries have increased to 82, the number of members has fallen seriously, to 126 in 1932—making a total of 208. It should be mentioned that the ordinary subscriptions do not cover the cost of publications—though all the work of the editors (including transcription of manuscripts) has been done gratis as a labour of love, and though administrative charges have been *nil* down to 1930, when it became necessary to give an honorarium to secure the services of a secretary and treasurer.

For some years the University College Dramatic Society generously allotted to the Society a substantial proportion of the profits from the "Little Plays," but this has now come to an end. To make up deficits the Society has relied—and never in vain—on generous contributions from its members.

The library has been formed chiefly by gifts, partly by exchanges. It was at first kept by the secretary, as the Society has no local habitation. In 1910 it was transferred to University

College, on the proposal of Professor W. P. Ker, where it is still kept, and is available to members both of the Society and the College, on the conditions specified in the annual report of 1930. There is a card index, but no up-to-date printed catalogue.

There is still a good deal of work which the Society might Thus, a careful study of the Fasciculus Morum throws some fresh light on the subject of popular preaching and beliefs, and an examination of the works of Fr. William of Woodford has been fruitful of results beyond all expectation. unpublished works of Robert Grosseteste (some of which certainly date from the time when he was lecturer to the Franciscans at Oxford) are crying out for an editor—but this is probably too big a job for the Society. The work which the committee has in hand immediately is a volume dealing with Franciscan history and legend in English Medieval Art. This would include descriptions, with as many illustrations as can be afforded, of wall-paintings, screens, windows, sculptures, etc., in English churches, miniatures and other paintings representing Franciscan subjects, or made by English Franciscans, with perhaps some account of the architectural remains of English Franciscan To make such a record in any way complete the active co-operation of members throughout the country is necessary. Any member able and willing to help can obtain further information and suggestions by writing to the hon. secretary.

A. G. L.

THE SEVENTH CENTENARY OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI (1226-1926) 1

St. Francis is being commemorated this year—the seventh centenary of his death—all over the world. He was accustomed to being fêted even in his lifetime, and did not like it. A recently discovered *Fioretto* will show how he dealt with demonstrations of this kind—taking a kind of mischievous pleasure in defeating them:—

"St. Francis one day, being at St. Mary of the Angels, called Brother Masseo of Marignano and said to him: 'Brother, let us go and preach the Word of God.' And they went towards the parts of Rome. And as they drew nigh to a city, the bishop of that city, having heard the fame of St. Francis' sanctity and being aware of his coming, arrayed himself in pontificals and issued forth to receive him outside the city. And when St. Francis heard of this, he said to his companion: 'Brother, this is to our confusion': who answered: 'Wherefore?' And St. Francis said: 'Seest thou not that these are come apparelled thus to do us honour? What shall we do? unto God that He may deliver us from this shame.' His companion said: 'What can we do? To turn back and flee is a vile thing. Let us do the best we may.' And as the bishop and his clergy were already near, St. Francis looked and beheld a mass of potter's clay outside the road, which was prepared for the use of that craft, namely, for the making of earthen And straightway, having lifted up his skirts, even as

¹ A lecture given to some branches of the Historical Association in the autumn of 1926.

those who work up clay or tread the wine press are wont to do, he entered that mass of clay and began stoutly to tread it and work it up with his feet. Seeing which the bishop, despising him as a fool, turned back with his procession, leaving St. Francis treading the clay."

What was it that drew men to him during his lifetime and still draws men to him 700 years after his death? It was a question also asked by his friends and contemporaries. same Brother Masseo stood and looked at him one day and said: "Why after thee? Why after thee?" "What wouldst thou say?" asked St. Francis. "I say, why doth all the world come after thee? and why do all men long to see thee and hear thee and obey thee? Thou art not beautiful, thou art not of much wisdom, thou art not noble of birth: whence comes it then that it is after thee that the whole world doth run?" Francis' answer was that God chose him, because he was the meanest of God's creatures, to show forth His power. The answer convinced Masseo that Francis was rooted in humility: whether he regarded it as a satisfactory explanation is not stated. We often use long words to hide our ignorance: the word we should use here would probably be "personality." That would merely come to saying: Francis had power because he was himself. It doesn't tell us much: I doubt whether it is true.

The conviction that he was called and chosen by God comes out again and again in St. Francis' life and writings. Thus at the end of his life, in his Testament: "No one showed me what I ought to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the holy Gospel." The words in which his earliest biographer, Thomas of Celano, describes what we may call the final stage in his conversion may be quoted, because they bring Francis' religious experience into line with the religious experience of many men and women in different ages and many different conditions: "There was poured into him assurance of the forgiveness of all offences, and confidence of restoration of grace was vouchsafed to him."

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He had what is familiar to other ages and other churches as "the assurance of salvation."

That was the end of his conversion: it began in another fashion. Francis as a young man was very much like other young men—only more so. And like many young men in easy circumstances he grew up in an atmosphere of money-making and romance. These two forces acted on him—one by repulsion, the other by attraction. As a rule the money-making overgrows and starves the romance.

"Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The youth who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

The reverse happened with St. Francis. His early ambition was to be a soldier-a knight-errant such as he heard tell of in the songs of chivalry, which he got by heart and sang in French. These songs and the ideals of chivalrous adventure remained with him and coloured all his life. "My Knights of the Round Table "he called his friars: "We are minstrels of the Lord": Charlemagne, Roland and Oliver and all the paladins were among his heroes: and Brother Giles of Assisi who, coming of peasant stock, probably did not know much about the romances of chivalry, learnt from Francis all about Roland and his wonderful horse Bayard. The perfect knight must have a lady for whose sake he will gladly make sacrifices and lay down his life. was quite within the poetic tradition that the lady should be an idea: perhaps suggested originally by a form of flesh and blood, but etherealised and spiritualised by the poet-lover's imagination. Dante's Beatrice began as a girl and ended as the spirit of theology. Who should be the lady of Francis and what form should his chivalrous devotion take?

Celano, who is our earliest authority, had little understanding for this romantic and chivalrous element; his allusions to it are few and discreet: it wasn't quite proper for a saint-and Celano is thoroughly conventional. When (as in the second Life) he was writing from written documents he did not scruple to alter what was before him in order to make it edifying; the first Life was based mainly on oral communications, and it may reasonably be presumed that he treated these in the same way. For the early years, too, his information must have been inadequate. We cannot follow with certainty the steps in the conversion of St. Francis. Celano lets us see him going through a spiritual crisis—dissatisfied with his former life and its pleasures and ambitions and seeking a new way-" a hidden treasure," about which he talks to an admiring friend. Then suddenly in the midst of this he reverts to an old ambition and rides off with a gay company to the wars. In a few days he is back again: he has the courage to appear a coward. Somewhere about the same time occurred his meeting with the leper. The sight and smell of lepers filled him with unutterable loathing. "As he used to say, the sight of lepers was so bitter to him that when in the days of his vanity he looked at their houses about two miles off, he held his nose. . . . One day, while still in the habit of the world, he met a leper and, overcoming himself, went near and kissed him." To his friends he seemed like a man in love: "Francis, are you going to take a wife?" they asked. "I will marry a nobler and fairer bride than you ever saw, who shall surpass all others in beauty and excel them in wisdom." So writes Celano, who goes on to suggest that this Bride was "true Religion." But there is no evidence and no likelihood that Francis thought at this time of becoming a "religious" -of joining, still less of founding, a religious Order. The Bride he was thinking of was the lady despised of all others, whose praises he sang and whose champion be became for the rest of his life—the Lady Poverty. There was no lady of romance who could demand greater sacrifices. It was a kind of inverted chivalry.

The result of Francis' spiritual struggle was the reversal of values as estimated by the world. He lived paradoxes. You

may have noticed that in the *Fioretto* I read at the beginning of this lecture honour becomes shame. So poverty is real riches, to beg is "a great nobility and dignity," "perfect joy" is attained by suffering gladly all the miseries and discomforts of life, simplicity is wisdom, to rule is to serve. The last has in our day ceased to be a paradox and become almost a commonplace.

His first resounding adventure in the service of Lady Poverty was unfortunate. As Chesterton puts it with brutal frankness: "he stole." He stole his father's goods and sold them and gave the proceeds to a poor priest at San Damiano. The episode resulted in a breach with his family: Francis was thrown entirely on his own resources. And this was certainly necessary for his development. I do not find any condemnation of this act of Francis in any early Franciscan literature (except a warning from the bishop of Assisi that he must not spend ill-gotten money for sacred purposes), or any hint that he regretted it himself. Perhaps it was regarded as a leading of providence. This happened in 1206 when Francis was 25 or 26 years old. For the next two or three years he was working out his salvation alone—i.e., without the support of companions. It was a strenuous and active life, divided between care of the lepers, hard manual labour, and begging. At the end of his life he begins his Testament with the words: "The Lord gave to me, Brother Francis, thus to begin to do penance; for when I was in sin it seemed to me very bitter to see lepers, and the Lord Himself led me amongst them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them that which had seemed to me bitter was changed for me into sweetness of body and soul." He restored three churches near Assisi, among them San Damiano and the Portiuncula, with his own hands, with the help of any volunteers he could collect. He begged for the lepers, he begged materials for the churches, he begged food and clothing for himself, when the odd jobs he did failed to supply them; one hears of him working as a scullion in the kitchen of a monastery. was a hard trial to beg from the fashionable people of Assisi who had known him in his gay youth. It is interesting that in begging from them he broke out into French song—the language of chivalry. These were the three things he enjoined on his

friars—care of the lepers, manual labour, begging—he had practised them himself: like Chaucer's poor parson of a town—

"This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf
That first he wroghte, and afterwards he taughte."

St. Francis always combined the active life with the contemplative: periods of bodily labour alternated with periods of prayer and reflection. He was still seeking the way of life which would entirely satisfy his soul. The final revelation came when he was listening to the Gospel read in the church of the Portiuncula—on 24 February, 1209—"how Christ sent forth His disciples to preach" (Matt. x. 7-19): "As ye go preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . Possess neither gold nor silver nor money in your purses, no wallet for your journey, nor two coats nor shoes nor a staff. . . . " Francis was not good at Latin: when in later life he wrote a few words with much difficulty he generally got his cases wrong, but he understood enough to get some inkling of the meaning, as Celano puts it, and asked the priest to explain the passage. "This is what I am seeking," he cried, and he at once started to obey the call in his dramatic way by throwing away shoes and staff and substituting a cord for his leather girdle—and the Franciscan habit was complete. But it meant a new way of life: the imitation of Christ—"the poor Christ," to adopt a phrase often used in early Franciscan literature—became fused with service of Lady Poverty, the Gospel became the rule of life, and Francis no longer a solitary became again a leader of men, leading his knights on their great adventure of liberating the world from the wicked giants of avarice and hatred and pride. He made the glory and sacrifices of peace as compelling and romantic as the glory and sacrifices of war.

"Then," says Celano," with great fervour of spirit and joy of mind he began to preach repentance to all, with simple words but largeness of heart edifying his hearers. For his word was like a blazing fire piercing through the inmost heart, and it filled the minds of all with wonder. He seemed quite another man than he had been, and gazing on heaven he disdained to look on earth." That last conventional tag is singularly inappropriate

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to Francis 1 He, God's creature, was the brother of all God's creatures. He had as keen a sense of the close relationship between the physical and the spiritual world as Wordsworth had:—

"Communing in this sort through earth and heaven With every form of creature, as it looked Towards the Uncreated with a countenance Of adoration, with an eye of love."

And something of the same spirit seems to have permeated the Franciscan Order: you find it in one form or another in the theology of Bonaventura, the Biblical commentaries of Thomas Docking, the philosophy of Roger Bacon and Duns Scotus.

Francis began to collect a band of brothers round him—a mixed lot—"a pious simpleton" (or village idiot), a wealthy noble, a canon of the cathedral, a peasant philosopher. When they were twelve, they went to Rome and obtained from Pope Innocent III a verbal approval of their Rule and authorisation to preach repentance. The Rule consisted of a few extracts from the Gospels, but they regarded themselves as bound equally by all the precepts of the Gospel. The literal adherence to some of these had inconvenient results: "Take no thought for the morrow": Brother Cook was not allowed to make any preparations—or, indeed, to keep any stores: sufficient for the day had to be the food which came in that day: in England Matthew Paris noted that the friars kept no food for the morrow.

A few years later the small band of brothers had grown into a multitude, and had been joined also by a band of sisters. It is interesting to see how they struck a contemporary who did not belong to the fraternity. Jacques de Vitry, bishop-elect of Acre in Palestine, later famous as the historian of the Crusades, arrived at Perugia on the day of the death of Innocent III, 16 July, 1216, and soon afterwards wrote a letter to his friends in France describing his journey and experiences: "One comfort I found in those parts: many of both sexes, rich and poor,

¹ Contrast the *Speculum Perfectionis*, cap. 118: "We who were with him used to see him so greatly rejoice both inwardly and outwardly in nearly all created things that in touching them or looking on them his spirit seemed to be not upon earth but in heaven."

clergy and laity, having left all things for Christ were fleeing from the world: they were called Friars Minor. They are held in great reverence by pope and cardinals. They are in no way occupied with temporal things, but with fervent love and eager zeal labour every day to save perishing souls from the vanities of the world. . . . And already by God's grace they have reaped a great harvest and gained many. . . . They themselves live according to the form of the primitive church, of whom it is written: The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul. By day they come into cities and towns that they may win some, living the life of action; at night they go back to a hermitage or solitary places devoting themselves to contemplation. The women live together in diverse lodgings near cities; they accept nothing but live by the work of their hands. But they are often much distressed because they are honoured by clergy and laity more than they would wish. men of this Order assemble with manifold advantage once a year at an appointed place, that they may together rejoice in the Lord, and feast; and they then, with the advice of good men, make their holy regulations which are confirmed by the pope. After this they are dispersed through the whole of the rest of the year throughout Lombardy and Tuscany and Apulia and Sicily. . . . I believe that to the shame of bishops, who are like dumb dogs unable to bark, the Lord by these unlettered and poor men wills to save many souls before the end of the world."

This is a fine "unsolicited testimonial." There is plenty of evidence of the extraordinary power exercised by Francis over all classes of people. He radiated peace, goodwill and mutual confidence. It was not what he said that affected them. A learned philosopher remarked that while he could remember every word of the sermons of others, "the words of Francis alone escaped me, and if I commit any of them to memory they do not seem to be the same as when he used them." Here is another description of Francis' preaching—by the archdeacon of Spalato: "In 1222 on the day of the Assumption (15 August) when I was a student at Bologna, I saw St. Francis preaching in the piazza in front of the town hall. Almost all the city had assembled there. His text was 'Angels, men,

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devils,' and he discoursed of these three rational spirits so well and wisely that many learned men who were present were astonished at the words of such an ignorant man. Yet his style was not that of a preacher but of a man conversing. The whole matter of his discourse was an appeal to extinguish enmities and make lasting peace. His dress was mean, his appearance contemptible and his face without beauty: but God lent such power to his words that many bands of nobles, among whom the savage fury of ancient feuds had raged with much shedding of blood, were brought back to the way of peace."

He could sometimes work this miracle without his personal presence. When he lay dying, a quarrel broke out between the bishop and the podestà of Assisi: the bishop excommunicated the podestà and the podestà boycotted the bishop. Francis composed another verse to his Song of Brother Sun and told some of his companions to bring the two enemies together and sing it to them:—

"Be praised my Lord, for those who for Thy love forgive, Contented unavenged in quiet to live.

Bless those who in the way of peace are found—

By Thee, O Lord Most High, they shall be crowned!"

The bishop and podestà both confessed themselves in the wrong and each begged forgiveness of the other. Francis made no attempt to go into the rights and wrongs of the case: he simply substituted an atmosphere of love and mutual trust for one of hatred and suspicion.

But the success of the movement brought new problems and new dangers, necessitated compromises and modifications of the way of life of the primitive friars. When the friars numbered thousands some organisation and control became necessary. One of the earliest steps taken—when the friars were still confined to Italy—was the division into provinces and the institution of provincial ministers. What authority should they have? Francis always insisted on the duty of obedience—willing and loving obedience—but that one man should be lord over others was repugnant to his nature. So when ministers were instituted, various provisions were made

defining and limiting their authority. The brethren were to obey their ministers "in those things which concern the salvation of the soul and are not contrary to our life." "If, however, one of the ministers should command some one of the brethren anything contrary to our life or to his soul, the brother is not bound to obey him." The ministers, as the name implied, were to be servants, not masters. "Not any of the brethren shall have authority or lordship, especially among themselves." (The words are "Omnes fratres non habeant aliquam potestatem vel dominationem maxime inter se." Fr. Paschal Robinson translates this: "Let not all the brothers have power and authority, especially among themselves," which is meaningless. "Omnes . . . non" is an emphatic way of saying none: as in Ps. 147, 20: "Non fecit taliter omni nationi," "He hath not dealt so with any nation.") This provision in the early Rule appears in an even exaggerated form in the final Rule of 1223. Ministers are to treat brethren, who come to them and say that they are prevented from obeying the Rule spiritually, in such a way that the brethren "may speak and act to them (the ministers) as masters to their servants, for so it ought to be, since the ministers are the servants of all the brethren." A topsyturvy world! Francis had a bitter struggle with the ministers over this Rule. The exact points of difference are not clearly defined: but I suppose one of them was this question of the ministers' authority, and this sounds like a retort to their demands for more power. It was a gallant attempt to include in the Rule itself an assertion of the rights of the individual conscience within a community.

Another problem which arose owing to the increase of the Order was the question of housing—of a settled life—which touched the central principle of poverty. In the first years of the Order there were friars but no friaries—i.e., no houses inhabited by friars all the year round—except the huts round the little chapel of the Portiuncula: but this was the headquarters of the Order, the centre to which friars from all parts naturally turned, and the great meeting-place. Elsewhere the friars used barns or huts, deserted hermitages, or leper hospitals as their temporary lodgings; others continued to live in private houses

as servants, or worked at the trade to which they had been brought up. The early Rule says: "Let the brethren, in whatever places they may be among others to serve or work, not be chamberlains nor cellarers nor overseers in the houses of those they serve . . . but let them be inferior and subject to all who are in the same house. And let the brethren who know how to work, labour and exercise themselves in that art that they understand, if it be not contrary to the salvation of their soul. . . . And let every man abide in the art or employment wherein he was called. And for their labour they may receive all necessary things, except money. And if they be in want, let them seek for alms like other poor brethren. And they may have the tools and implements necessary for their work." There was no "conventual life" such as characterised the monastic Orders. But the increase in numbers made this free and easy life impracticable. There must be some discipline, and the most obvious way was to group a number of friars together in permanent houses. When Francis came back from the east and his famous visit to the Soldan, in 1220, he found that a house had been built for the friars in Bologna. Francis went there and ordered all the friars to leave the house forthwith. Cardinal Ugolino (afterwards Gregory IX), who was then Legate in Lombardy, intervened and declared the house belonged to him and the friars merely had the use of it during his pleasure. On these terms Francis allowed them to return. But henceforth larger and permanent houses in towns and cities became a normal feature in the Order, the temporary lodgings and hermitages in solitary places the exception. The ownership of the houses did not pass to the friars, but remained either with the original donors, or with the community of the town, or with the Holy See. That some such change was inevitable if the Order was to endure is true: but it is clear that it did alter materially the character of the Franciscan brotherhood. Cardinal Ehrle argues somewhere that he who wills the end wills the means: St. Francis wanted to found a great and permanent Order: therefore he willed the means which made that end possible. This may be logic: but human nature is not always logical.

learned element in the Order. Francis had a humble reverence for learning and learned men, in their proper place: but their proper place was not among the lesser brethren, who had chosen the way of simplicity. We see even in Celano with what misgiving Francis regarded the growth of the clerical element among the friars. He had received deacon's orders and was anxious not to be distinguished from his simple lay brethren. St. Francis was shaved," says Celano, "he often said to the barber: 'Take care not to make me a large tonsure. For I wish that my simple brethren may have a share in my head.' He wished, in a word, that the Order should be open to the poor and unlettered, and not only to the rich and learned. 'With God,' he said, 'there is no acceptance of persons and the Holy Spirit, the Minister-General of the Order, rests equally on the poor and ignorant.' He wished to put these words into the Rule, but the sealing which had taken place precluded it." 1

And Celano goes on to quote another remarkable saying of St. Francis—that "when a great clerk or scholar entered the Order, he ought in some sort to resign even his learning, in order that having stripped himself of such possession he might offer himself naked to the arms of the Crucified."

But Celano was himself a learned man and thoroughly in sympathy with the advancement of learning among the friars: and he generally treats the subject with "discretion." Thus he says (§ 163): "He would have as ministers of God's word men who should apply themselves to spiritual studies and not be shackled by other duties." He had before him, when he wrote this, a very different statement by Brother Leo: namely that Francis urged ministers and preachers to "exercise themselves in works of humility and lowly services." ²

Learning meant the possession of books and so was inconsistent with the Rule and the absolute poverty both of the individual friars and of the Order. It would also tend to the distinction between the learned and simple brothers and to the growth of a kind of learned aristocracy in the Order, and

¹ 2 Cel. II, cap. cxlv, § 193.

² Spec. Perf., ed. Sabatier, cap. 73. Cf. Spec. Perf., ed. Lemmens, 7; Intentio Regulæ, ed. Lemmens, 9.

further to set words above deeds. "A man's knowledge (said St. Francis) is just what he does." Example was better than precept. A life of cheerful self-sacrifice did more to lead men to God than the most eloquent sermons, and needed no learning.

Yet this development was both inevitable and desirable. Learned men were attracted to the life of self-sacrifice no less than the simple: nowhere did the Franciscan message meet with more enthusiastic response than in the university towns. When a scholar became a friar, why should he not use all his gifts and talents in the service of God and man? The intense spiritual life of the early friars naturally produced a vigorous intellectual life. Though the Franciscan movement (unlike the Dominican) was not primarily or consciously directed against heresy, the Friars Minor were necessarily brought into contact with the spirit of inquiry that was abroad in the world. Further, the influence of farseeing prelates, such as the Cardinal Ugolino, who wanted to use the Franciscans for the interests of the Church in general has to be considered, and this influence was used wholeheartedly to promote learning in the Order.

Francis was a devoted son of the Church. In his authentic writings he recurs again and again to the two points—reverence for the Body and Blood of Christ and reverence for priests who administer the sacrament. Thus in the letter to all the faithful: "We should confess all our sins to a priest and receive from him the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . We ought also to visit churches often, and to hold clerics in reverence, not for themselves merely, if they are sinners, but on account of their office and the administration of the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they sacrifice upon the altar, and receive, and distribute to others. And let all of us know most certainly that no one can be saved except through the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the holy words of the Lord, which clerics say and announce and minister, and which they alone ought to minister and not others." But few have reconciled more completely than he submission with liberty. His attitude to the Church may be compared with that of a loyal subject to the State. The loyal subject recognises the authority of the State, but that does not prevent him from

endeavouring to change and reform the State and bring its policy into harmony with his own ideas. A point may come when one has to choose between rebellion and submission either to Church or State; this point was reached by some of St. Francis' followers a century later, when they renounced allegiance to the "carnal church" and tried to establish a spiritual church. It is safe to say that the idea of rebellion never even occurred to St. Francis. But he resisted with all his power the policy of the Roman Curia and of many of his own followers, when it was inconsistent with the way of life which Christ Himself had revealed to him. The policy of using the coercive authority of the Church to assist the mission of the friars was a kind of treason to his ideal. In his Testament he says: "I strictly enjoin on all the brethren that, wherever they may be, they should not dare, either themselves or by means of others, to ask any letter in the Roman Curia either for a church or for any other place, nor under pretext of preaching, nor on account of their bodily persecutions; but wherever they are not received, let them flee to another land to do penance, with the blessing of God."

Thomas of Celano carefully avoids all reference to this prohibition though he had the Testament before him and also the following statement by Brother Leo. "Some of the brethren said to the Blessed Francis: 'Father, seest thou not that the bishops at times do not allow us to preach, and make us for many days stand idle in a district before we are able to announce the word of God? Better were it that thou shouldst obtain from the lord Pope a privilege in this matter and it would be the salvation of souls.'

"To whom he made answer rebuking them sore and saying: You Friars Minor, you know not the will of God nor will you allow me to convert the whole world as God wishes; for my will is first of all to convert the prelates by holy humility and reverence, so that, when they see our holy life and our humble reverence towards them, they shall ask you to preach and convert the people, and these things will call the people to you better than the privileges you want, which will lead you to pride. . . . I for my part wish to obtain this privilege from the Lord, namely,

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that I may never have any privilege from man, save only the privilege to do reverence to all and to convert all men through obedience to our holy Rule rather by example than by word.' "1 But the policy of seeking privileges prevailed and led to embittered controversies between the friars and the parish priests which lasted all through the Middle Ages.

Thus in various ways the Order was developing along other lines than those St. Francis had laid down, sometimes in direct conflict with his ideals. When urged by those who held to the primitive life to take strong measures and compel the recalcitrant friars to return to the old ways, he remained true to the principle he had always taught—that example and humility and love were the weapons of the true winner of souls; his office, he said, was "spiritual"; "he would not become an executioner to punish and scourge them like the rulers of this world." He retired more and more from the management of affairs, leaving the government of the Order to the Cardinal Ugolino and the able and ambitious Brother Elias, and tried to carry out his ideal in his own life and be an example or "Mirror of Perfection" to the brethren; "and at the end his spirit did herein find rest and comfort."

Some two years before his death, namely, about the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 14 September, 1224, on the mountain of La Verna, St. Francis received the Stigmata. Celano's account is as follows: "While he dwelt in the hermitage which from the place where it is situated is called Alverna, two years before he gave back his soul to heaven, he saw in a vision of God a man like a seraph having six wings, standing over him with hands outstretched and feet joined together, fixed to a cross. Two wings were raised above his head, two were spread out for flight, and two veiled the whole body. Now when the blessed servant of the Most High saw this, he was filled with exceeding great wonder, but he could not understand what this vision might mean. Yet he rejoiced greatly and was filled with vehement delight at the benign and gracious look where-

¹ Spec. Perf., ed. Sabatier, cap. 50; ed. Lemmens, cap. 44: Angeli Clareni Expositio Regulæ, ed. Oliger, p. 129.

with he saw that he was regarded by the seraph, whose beauty far exceeded all estimation; but the crucifixion and the bitterness of the seraph's suffering smote him altogether with fear. Thus he arose, so to speak, sorrowful and glad; and joy and grief alternated in him. He anxiously pondered what this vision might portend, and his spirit laboured sore to come to an understanding of it. And while he continued without any clear perception of its meaning and the strangeness of the vision was perplexing his heart, marks of nails began to appear in his hands and feet, such as he had seen a little while before in the Man crucified who had stood over him."

There are two detailed descriptions of the wounds by contemporaries; the first by Brother Elias, written within a few days of the death of St. Francis; the other by Celano, written in 1228; they are alike in essentials, but sufficiently different to be independent of each other. Of even greater value for the fact of the Stigmata is the testimony of Brother Leo, who was with St. Francis at La Verna. In the Sacro Convent at Assisi is a small worn piece of parchment, written on both sides. On the recto are written in an unskilled hand praises of the Most High God-occupying seventeen short lines. On the verso the central part is taken up with a blessing written in the same hand: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee-show his face to thee and have mercy on thee-turn his face towards thee and give thee peace." Below is a large capital T or headless cross, standing on something: beside the T are the words in the same hand, "The Lord bless thee Brother Leo." Just above this is written in the hand of a trained scribe: "The blessed Francis wrote with his own hand this blessing to me Brother Leo." At the top of the page in the same clerkly hand of Brother Leo is this note: "The blessed Francis two years before his death kept a Lent in the hermitage of Alverna in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and Blessed Michael the Archangel from the Feast of the Assumption of St. Mary the Virgin to the Feast of St. Michael in September. And the hand of the Lord was laid upon him. After the vision and speech he had of the Seraph and the impression in his body of the Stigmata of Christ, he made these praises which are written on

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the other side of the sheet, and with his own hand he wrote them out, giving thanks to God for the favour that had been conferred on him." The historical evidence of the fact of the Stigmata seems to me conclusive. I will not attempt any physiological or psychological explanation. Perhaps we shall not improve on the statement of the Legend of the Three Companions: 1 that there appeared in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus which ever while he lived he bore in his heart.

A. G. LITTLE.

¹ Cf. also I Cel. Pt. II, ch. ix, § 115.



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI AND SOME OF HIS BIOGRAPHERS¹

There is one sense in which I feel myself unsuitable to be giving this Memorial Lecture, for I never had the pleasure and privilege of meeting Walter Seton. I knew his handwriting, and we collaborated in the Essays in Commemoration of Saint Francis, published in 1926. But I regret much not to have heard Mr. Seton's voice and shaken his hand, for if universal testimony be evidence he was a most attractive and lovable man. Our collaboration in those Essays has emboldened me to continue to-day in much the same line: it is, indeed, almost the only side of Franciscan study about which I am at all competent to speak. I warn the specialists at once that I have nothing very fresh to put forth, but the learning of specialists I have found to take a very long time in getting to the consciousness of the majority.

My text, then, is Walter Seton's Essay in the Commemoration volume. It is called *The Rediscovery of St. Francis of Assisi*. Many of you doubtless know it, and are aware how easily and beautifully the subject is covered. The specialists know also what a grasp is shown in it of the problems and of the literature connected with the study of St. Francis and his work. But, as I said just now, the specialists are not allowed to have it all their own way. I sometimes wonder whether the real St. Francis is really so popular as he seems, or seemed to be in the

¹ The Walter Seton Memorial Lecture, given at University College, London, on 20 January, 1931.

great commemoration year of 1926. A very intelligent lady of my acquaintance professed to me a great interest in St. Francis, but a chance remark brought out the fact that she had never read any of the *Speculum Perfectionis*. I don't mean that she preferred Lemmens's text to Sabatier's; she did not know any form of that great collection of anecdotes. So I lent her Mr. Steele's translation, the well-known little book in the Temple Classics. But what was the result? She told me, "I read it with much interest, but I am afraid that I like the Francis of the Little Plays better than this one! And," she added, "I know this is the real one."

My lady friend, you see, was both intelligent and candid. I think her frank remarks do raise the question as to what constitutes value and excellence in a Biographer. The answer, so it seems to me, very much depends upon what we are wanting the Biographer for.

There are two main reasons why we read biographies or books about persons, just as there are two reasons why we look at a portrait. We may look at a portrait as a work of art, as a thing in itself, or we may look at it in order to get an idea, or a better idea, of what the sitter looked like. Both are reasonable uses of a portrait, each in its place, but they are not the same thing. When we read, or see acted, the Little Plays of St. Francis, we are considering something that is an end in itself. The impression it makes upon us is what matters. We may be persuaded that the view taken of St. Francis is in the main historical, but the value of the Plays does not consist in their strict adherence to the right tradition. The special value of the Speculum Perfectionis, on the other hand, consists in its alleged fidelity to fact, not only to the facts of St. Francis's life and sayings but to the facts about the feelings of his intimate friend. Nos qui cum ipso fuimus-" you may say what you will, but we who were with him know how things were "-that is where the sting, the prick, the pathos of the Speculum lies. We listen not to a work of art, but to the echoes of an actual struggle. something external to the actual portrait of Francis painted in the Speculum. And I venture to say that those who read the Speculum Perfectionis now, convinced that it is an ingenious

rearrangement made in 1318, a rearrangement of an earlier miscellany containing tales of Francis, contributed some by Brother Leo, some by other hands, do not feel the same thrill, the same intimate impression, as did those who read it about 1900, when they had some reason to believe that it was all the work of Leo and that he was writing in 1227 or 1228, less than two years after his friend and master had passed away.

In Biography, especially in the biography of one who lived long ago under very different conditions from our own, we cannot get at absolute truth, but the discovery of a new source of information may give us a closer approximation. And I think it is not the positive amount of information that we have in any case, the actual amount of detail we may possess, that gives interest and life to a figure of past history: what gives this life and interest is the process of getting a closer approximation. It is the getting nearer, not the actual nearness we attain, that seems to make the far-off figure live.

It may be roughly stated that there are four Biographies of St. Francis: the official Life by Bonaventura, the First Life by Thomas of Celano, the Life that Brother Leo never wrote, and the Fioretti. At least, all the biographical material can be ideally grouped under these four heads. Bonaventura represents St. Francis as Church Authority would like to remember him, and there was really so much in St. Francis that was agreeable to Church Authority that it is not so very far from the truth. The papers and tracts that come to us from Leo, particularly the Intentio Regule, are real reminiscences of an intimate friend: I would say that tales and sayings of Francis which are fundamentally inconsistent with the Intentio cannot be accurate The Fioretti and allied literature attest the reminiscences. impression made by Francis on the outside world with which he came in touch. Thomas of Celano, like Bonaventura, represents the point of view of Church Authority, of ecclesiastical discretion. But the Prima Legenda, the "First Life," is so old —it really was written in 1228—that in many respects it is invaluable. It is at least free from false notions and later developments which only arose after it had been published.

In the Commemoration volume there is an arresting paper

by Mr. Harold Goad on what he calls the Dilemma of St. Francis. He sees in the movement started by Francis a double tendency, the tendency to the Missionary and the tendency to the Hermit life. Unless I am very much mistaken, there is in Mr. Goad's paper a sort of polemic against the view championed more or less by Paul Sabatier, the view that the Large Observance of the majority of the Friars was an act of unfaithfulness to the ideals of Francis himself. The *Fioretti* and the Leo documents, except so far as these may be authenticated by the pen of Thomas of Celano, are regarded by Mr. Goad as untrustworthy, though he acknowledges many of the stories to be beautiful as stories. For his picture of Francis Mr. Goad abides by Bonaventura.

I feel there was room, particularly in 1926, for the expression of Mr. Goad's point of view. Probably we have all met persons full of enthusiasm for the picturesque side of St. Francis's life, and for nothing else about him. It would have been more picturesque if the Friars had remained in their primitive poverty and simplicity—only we should never have heard about them But the task of the evaluator of ecclesiastical movements and that of the pure historian is different, though they are often confused and may indeed be combined by the same individual. Mr. Goad sees "in the immense success of the Franciscan ministry, in its missions, its great friaries and its theological schools, proof that this was its true line of development." He thinks that "the little hermitages seem to have lost touch with life," and notes that "they produced no saint to be compared with St. Anthony or St. Bonaventura." No, indeed, they were not seeking "privileges," and the right to put "St." before your name is a privilege! What they were doing was a work of which we to-day are reaping the benefit. They were preserving just that picturesque and unconventional side of St. Francis that has so powerfully attracted so many moderns and has shown him to be, in Mussolini's words, il più Italiano dei santi, a man glowing with local colour.

Local colour is not enough to keep a man alive. A hundred years ago, as Walter Seton points out, the world "thought of Francis, if it thought at all, as a dead Roman Catholic." What

makes a man live for us is not one single factor, but a combination of factors. He must be great in himself and have accomplished great things, and yet there must be something intimate, familiar, human, even frail about him, something akin to ourselves and to the living men and women we know. Who is there that is not pleased to think that Julius Cæsar, one of the greatest and most enlightened of mankind, though he refused the crown yet accepted the wreath offered him, because he did not like people to notice that he was growing bald? I venture to think, ladies and gentlemen, that you will agree with me in this; but I think also that few of the writers of the Lives of Saints will agree with us. Their ideal is rather that of the stained-glass window, a source of light but with little modelling.

To come back to the biography of St. Francis, the Life by Bonaventura held the stage for about six hundred years. What was the result? The result was that none but a few specialists thought about him. And now that Francis has come into his own again, it is only just to remember that the work of Hase and Renan and Sabatier had been prepared for by what may be called the labour of the laboratory, I mean especially the studies of the Bollandist Fathers.

It is difficult for us at the present day to put ourselves into the attitude of the eighteenth century with regard to the Poverello. Roman Catholics, of course, accepted him as the Seraphic Father, the founder of the Minorites, and no doubt there were a certain number of Friars who read with pleasure and edification some of the stories about him. But if you want to see what impression these stories, in the form they were generally known, made upon the worldly and the Protestant part of Christendom, read the Alcoran des Cordeliers. sists of extracts from the Conformities of Bartholomew of Pisa with sarcastic notes, which, though made in the sixteenth century, were still thought worthy of being reprinted in 1734 with engravings by an artist of repute. The conclusion I draw is, that it was known that Francis was the founder of the Order of begging Friars, that the record of his life was so encumbered with puerile and unauthenticated tales as to make it impossible

to discover what sort of man he really was, and that in any case it didn't much matter.1

The Reverend Father Constantin Suyskens, Bollandist, may not have been a historian of genius, but I do not think the time for constructing a Life of St. Francis had arrived. was too much lumber first to be cleared away. Sabatier saw Suyskens's faults only too plainly. He is prosy and St. Francis was a poet, he is as discreet as any biographer could be, and Francis was undeniably impulsive. But it should always be remembered what a delicate task not Suyskens only, but all the Bollandist Fathers, had before them. The Saints were the glory of the Catholic Church, but the tales told about them were, in many cases, old wives' fables, the sport of rationalists and infidels. A new criterion of historical probability was growing up in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Kepler and Newton had reduced the heavenly bodies to order, the prodigies told by heathen historians of old were being called in question. Must the deeds of the great heroes of the Church be relegated to the domain of what Protestants were calling "monkish fables"? Surely there was a great deal of chaff in the alleged exploits of the Saints: could not something be done to winnow this chaff from the wheat? It was with something like this in their mind that Rosweyd, and after him Bolland and Papebroeck, began their memorable labours, labours which to many simple Catholics of their time appeared

¹ That Francis established the begging Friars was not a recommendation to the editors of the *Alcoran des Cordeliers*, as is clear from the verses prefixed to the Preface:—

Jesus Christ repeut cinq mil hommes, Et sainct François à qui nous sommes En entretient par son secours Plus de dix mille tous les jours, Gras, en bon poinct, sans s'entremettre De mestier où la main faut mettre . . .

Our Lord once fed five thousand men, Saint Francis every day feeds ten— Ten thousand of us by his aid Find every day our table laid, So we are fat and jolly, though No useful trade or craft we know!

as destructive as Dowsing the Puritan image-breaker does to us.¹

It was not all destruction, far from it. The Bollandists in the Netherlands, like Mabillon and the Maurists a generation earlier in France, were gradually learning the methods of that new science of critical history, the methodical reconstruction of the forgotten Past, that is the glory of our time. And the Acta Sanctorum was their material, a material on which sober criticism and scientific method had never been used. In the case of St. Francis what was then specially needed was not reconstruction but analysis, a display of the materials out of which the reconstruction might some day be made, and a rejection of some of the material as too badly authenticated to be used.

It is a curious fact that the merits and the achievements and (I would venture to add) the errors of Constantin Suyskens and of Paul Sabatier are very similar. The learned Bollandist rediscovered and edited I Celano, Sabatier rediscovered and edited the Speculum Perfectionis: it was as the first editors of primary Franciscan sources that they have the greatest claim upon the gratitude of posterity. Suyskens did wrong in rejecting entirely the Speculum Vitae literature and the atmosphere of unconventionality which it embodies, Sabatier did wrong in trusting this literature too much and in giving the impression that in their hearts both Francis and Brother Leo were rebels. Both wrote a Life of St. Francis, each of which with all shortcomings was a landmark in the history of Franciscan study.

One great feature in Sabatier's Life of St. Francis was its great popularity. That was not the case ever with the huge tome, vol. ii, for October, of the Acta Sanctorum. The greatest of all Suyskens's faults is that he is dry, incredibly dry. He does not appreciate irregular verses in volgare, and when he quotes a line or two of the Canticum fratris Solis in what is really a chronological Note it is always in Latin. Love, admiration, enthusiasm for St. Francis—it is not these things that he raises up. His business is rather a question of anatomy. The

¹ Papebroeck in particular incurred the enmity of the Carmelites for maintaining that their Order was not founded by Elijah the Prophet!

publication of I Celano, to a public that only knew Bonaventura's Life and also the tales of the Speculum Vitae, was rather like an exhibition of St. Francis's skeleton—or let us say an X-ray portrait. A skeleton is an unlovely thing to every one but an expert. On the other hand, it is the only thing upon which a living body can be built up. From the time of the Bollandist volume onwards the question "I Celano or Bonaventura" was posed. What are we to make of Brother Elias? Did St. Francis trust him, and give him at the end his special blessing? Or again, what were the circumstances of St. Francis's conversion? How did he come to think of changing his former manner of life? Or, if these points be thought too small and detailed, the question could not but be asked which of the two Lives were more credible. There is a certain vigour and life about the portrait sketched in I Celano that is absent from the amiable figure described in Bonaventura. Upon which is a scientific historian to base his own reconstruction?

These were serious questions. On the whole, the answer would be that we ought to take *I Celano*, but I seem to hear the voice of M. Sabatier whispering in my ear and asking whether the portrait sketched in *I Celano*, if that was all the real Francis, could have given rise to the fancy and the poetic imagination of the stories in the *Fioretti?*

I do not think, even in this hasty summary, I ought to leave out the name of Father Ireneo Affò of Parma, who in a little tract published in 1777 defended St. Francis's authorship of the Cantico del Sole, while showing that the two other poems ascribed to him by Bernadino of Siena (and by Wadding) are not his. In 1806 the Second Life by Thomas, known as 2 Celano, was published by Rinaldi: there was no fresh edition till 1879.

It is now time to say something about Thomas of Celano and the character of his work. Brother Thomas was evidently a useful friar who never gave his superiors any trouble. He did

¹ In the 1st ed. of the Speculum Perfectionis (1898), p. ccx, Sabatier remarks that this brochure by Affò "passe pour perdu." At a later date, however, a copy turned up, and Sabatier had a MS. transcript made of it, which he was kind enough to let me read.

what he was told. He seems to have joined the Order about 1217, being received by Francis himself (I Cel. 56 f.), but he shows no sign of having had any personal intimacy with him. He was certainly present at the canonisation of Francis (16 July, 1228), and his account of the ceremony has all the intimacy and detail of the newspaper reporter. I should judge that he thoroughly enjoyed a great ecclesiastical ceremony. But neither in this description, where he is writing from his own experience, nor in the tales which he has received from others, does he forget his distinctive literary style. It is almost as distinctive as that of the Fourth Gospel-I mean, that you can hardly read a sentence without being conscious who is the writer. When Thomas wishes to tell us that the formal recitation of St. Francis's miracles, read out just before the act of canonisation, moved Pope Gregory and the high ecclesiastical dignitaries around him to enthusiasm and even to tears, what he says is: "The Pastor of the Church dances with excitement (tripudiat, a favourite word with Celano),1 and heaving long sighs from the depths of his vitals and ingeminating salutary sobs he brings forth rivulets of tears. The other Prelates of the Church also scatter floods of tears and the sacred vestments are bedewed with the exuberance of them " (I Cel. 125). What a style! What an inappropriate medium for preserving the memory of Francis!

Take another example: "How great an exhilaration, think you, did the spectacle of flowers induce in his (Francis's) mind, when he perceived the form of their loveliness and was aware of the smell of their sweetness? Immediately he turned the eye of consideration to the beauty of that Flower which brightly in spring time coming forth from the root of Fesse has raised up with its odour innumerable thousands of the dead. And when he found a quantity of flowers he used so to preach to them and invite them to the praise of the Lord as if they were endowed with reason" (I Cel. 81). What a charming bit of information, but how grotesquely worded! St. Francis loved wild flowers for themselves, and they also made him think of Jesus Christ, and he used to talk to them as if they, too, had the thoughts

¹ Cf. I Cel. 124, Tripudiant universi . . . in lacrimis.

that arose in his own sympathetic and image-forming mind. But Brother Thomas is not satisfied to say this without using three or four synonyms for "beauty" and dragging in a verbal reference to Holy Scripture.

His acquaintance with the text of the Bible is certainly remarkable. There are quotations or allusions in I and 2 Celano from most of the books of the Bible, including one from Tobit. Five of the Minor Prophets are represented, and all the Pauline Epistles except Thessalonians, Titus, and Philemon. He also had read, or heard read, St. Gregory's Homilies on the Gospels, for he twice quotes Gregory's dictum that miracles demonstrate saintliness but do not make it (I Cel. 70, 93). As Father E. d'Alençon points out in his Introduction to Thomas of Celano's works (p. xl), he may have heard Gregory's dictum in the course of liturgical readings, and it is possible that one more familiar than I am with the pieces read in mediæval Breviaries might succeed in identifying the non-biblical sources of Brother Thomas's literary allusions, but it is safe to say that if we find in I or 2 Celano odd phrases like "scattered morning" (mane expansum, I Cel. 37), the explanation will be found by looking up the words in the Concordance. In the case referred to the source is Joel ii. 2.1

Thomas of Celano, then, is a docile Friar but an excessively individual stylist; is he a faithful historian? Does he distort the meaning as well as the diction of his sources? In the case of *I Celano* we have no direct means of judging his faithfulness, but the case is different in *2 Celano*. Here we have in some cases what seem to be the original tales from which Thomas composed his recension. It would occupy much too long a space to set forth a detailed comparison: as a good example we may take the story of the harpist at Rieti that St. Francis heard at night (2 Cel. 126 = Per. 59). Here there is every reason to think we have Celano's source as well as his text. As Père

¹ It may be worth while noting here that the mysterious babylonicum illud of 2 Celano 125 comes from Jerome, Ep. xxii. 6, an exposition of Psalm cxxxvi. 8, 9. This part of § 125 has no parallel in the Speculum-literature, so that we may safely put down the Babylonian allusion to Thomas of Celano himself.

² I quote the Perugia Legend by Père Delorme's numeration of the sections in AFH xv (1922).

Delorme says: "The mention of the Camera Tabaldi Saraceni [a known house in Rieti], of the police regulations then in force against night noises, the literary modifications introduced in 2 Celano clearly in order to comply with the rules of the cursus, and the general tone of the two narratives, leave no doubt on this point" (Archivum Franciscanum Historicum, xv, p. 57, note). I would add also these further considerations. When Francis asked his companion to borrow a harp and the companion made difficulties, Francis said, "Well, then, Brother, let us give it up!" This seemed to Celano not sententious enough, so he adds, "It is good to give up much, lest opinion be hurt." Note the characteristic form of this sentence with an abstract noun (opinio) used as a nominative. In the sequel, after Francis has heard the mysterious harper in the night, he tells his companion (who is no doubt Brother Angelo), saying, "I asked thee, Brother, and thou wouldest not satisfy me, but the Lord who consoles His friends in tribulation has deigned this night to console me." So the Perugia text: Celano felt it a little petulant and changes it into a statement that Francis related the whole tale in order, adding, "The Lord who consoles the afflicted never has left me without consolation."

I venture to think that this example is characteristic. Thomas has preserved the facts, he has not been unfaithful to his source, but the tale as it leaves his hands is less picturesque and the part played by St. Francis less simple and natural. "Why go into details about such things?" you may say. "Why not be content to take the better form of the tale and enjoy it? The point is that for so much, including the whole contents of I Celano, we have only the Celanese form, and it is immensely important to know with how many pinches of salt we ought to read what he tells us. The very next section in 2 Celano to that which we have been considering is the picture of Francis taking a couple of sticks and pretending to play on them like a violin (2 Cel. 127). The section comes, indeed, in Sabatier's Speculum, but since the publication of the Perugia Legend it is clear that it is one of those chapters which has been taken into the Speculum direct out of 2 Celano. As it stands it is most picturesque, but how much more free and unconventional

it must have been in the source! Certainly the veins of the divine whisper which Francis's ear furtively received come from Job iv. 13, and are quite in Celano's Biblical manner. Ut oculis uidimus comes no doubt from the source; I do not think they were Thomas of Celano's eyes!

We pass now from Thomas of Celano to Brother Leo, and by Leo I mean the Intentio Regule and the Verba Francisci, together with sections C, D, and E of the Perugia Legend. What a change! Here, indeed, I believe we have the real Francis, sketched from the life by one who was not only an eye-witness but had besides much of the simplicity and directness of St. Francis's own outlook. Let me for a moment recall to you which the documents are that I have singled out. They come from two MSS., cod. 1/73 at San Isidoro, the Irish Franciscan convent in Rome, and cod. 1046 of the Communal Library at Perugia. Cod. 1/73 is a fourteenth-century MS. containing a collection of Franciscan documents different in many respects from any other known one: it was one of the MSS. collected by Luke Wadding, and its chief contents were published by the late Fr. Lemmens in the three little volumes called Documenta Antiqua Franciscana. It is indeed in this MS. that what is known as Lemmens' Speculum is found. Distinct from this Speculum are two short tracts, expressly assigned in the MS. to Brother Leo, known respectively as Intentio Regule and Verba Francisci. Both have as documents peculiar ancient attestation. Their matter indeed is to be found in Sabatier's Speculum and also in the Perugia Legend, but the interesting thing is that in the Arbor uite crucifixe by Ubertino da Casale, published in 1304, the Intentio is quoted almost entire, and when Ubertino comes to the end he adds, "Thus far are the words of Brother Leo." Ubertino does not quote from the other chapters of Sabatier's Speculum, so that we may be sure that he was quoting direct from the Intentio and that he knew it as the work of Leo. Similarly, Angelo da Clareno quotes the Verba Francisci. I think there can be little doubt that in the Intentio and in the nucleus at least of the Verba we have specimens of the "Rolls" and "Notes" that we are told Leo wrote.

The Perugia Legend is a collection of Franciscan tales in cod. 1046 at Perugia, which has been edited by Fr. Ferdinand Delorme, O.F.M.¹ They are the same tales as those of Sabatier's Speculum, but often with a better text, and they are arranged in a different order. The MS. itself is ancient, having been almost certainly written in the year 1311, but the special interest lies in the order of the tales. It had long been noticed that some of the tales in the Speculum are found word for word in 2 Celano, others appear in 2 Celano but in totally different wording. Sabatier had supposed that those which coincided word for word had been repeated by Thomas without alteration, though indeed in several cases, such as the tale of Francis pretending to play the violin, discussed above, the Celanese vocabulary is patent. But in the Perugia text all these verbatim coincidences are collected together in a separate section—in other words, they are taken direct from Celano, and Sabatier's Speculum has been formed from the Perugia text by mixing the tales up together. In the Perugia text we have the original from which Sabatier's Speculum was directly derived, just as the Fioretti is derived from the Latin Actus.

Very well, then, we have the *Intentio*, and the parts of the Perugia Legend which we may ascribe to Leo. They are extremely precious, we have indeed reason to be grateful that these writings have come down to us. But as I said at the beginning of this lecture, they do not amount to a *Vita*. Whatever he may have planned to do at one time or another Leo did not actually write a Life of Francis. The special value of these writings of Brother Leo is that they are untouched by Thomas of Celano's pen and so enable us to see through the Celanese rhetoric.

What are we to say of the *Fioretti* as an historical source for our knowledge of St. Francis? We now know a good deal about the source from which the *Fioretti* comes, and this cannot but have an influence on our judgment. The *Fioretti* is a trans-

¹ Delorme gave a full critical account, with the greater part of the text in AFH xv, 23-70, 278-332 (1922): he has also edited the "Legenda Antiqua" separately, Paris, 1926, but I quote from the former publication, because in the later one the paragraphs of the MS. are differently numbered.

lation of the Latin Actus, the "Acts of Blessed Francis and his Companions," which was first published as a separate work by Sabatier in 1902. Before that it had been known from the composite book called Speculum Vitae. The "Acts of Blessed Francis" are a compilation with which a certain Ugolino was concerned, of whom we know nothing certain, but he was probably a protégé of Pope Celestine V, and seems to have lived in the district east of the Apennines. The tales are concerned not only with St. Francis, but also with one John of La Verna who died in 1322. Further, there is some reason to think that the collection was made before 1328, before the fall of the Franciscan Minister-General Michael da Cesena.¹ These years are just the time when there seems to have been a general Franciscan movement to collect tales about St. Francis which lay outside those which had found a place in Bonaventura. First came Sabatier's Speculum in 1318, then the Three Companions, and lastly the Actus. All these writings reflect the sentiments of the Zelanti who were pleading for the more strict observance of the Rule, efforts which, after many ups and downs of fortune, were at last crowned with a measure of success through the recognition of the Observant Friars in 1363.

The years 1322-1328 are too late to allow the *Actus*, as it stands, the rank of an authority for what was happening just a little more than a century before, and the *Fioretti*, which is the Italian translation of the *Actus*, can have no more authority than its original. At the same time, as Paul Sabatier saw, this collection of tales has a peculiar value of its own. We may first note the curious difference between the literary fate of the *Actus* and the *Fioretti*, for it has a real bearing on the significance of St. Francis in general history. The *Fioretti*—every one has heard of the Little Flowers of St. Francis. Of course the word only means *Florilegium*, or a collection of stories. But it became immensely popular in Italy, where its title had no special poetical associations. I venture to think that the popularity of the *Fioretti* as compared with the *Actus* has real significance.

¹ See Sabatier, Actus, pp. xvii, xviii.

There was a certain popular element in the Franciscan movement. It was intensely religious (in the modern sense of the word), but it was outside the cloister. There was something fresh and spontaneous about it without being rebellious. It was indeed so successful that Church Authority had to take it in hand, and conduct the welling spring of enthusiasm into practical and useful channels. But the free out-of-door impulse had been really there. The movement could not have started without Francis, but Francis could not have so profoundly influenced his time had not the time been ripe for him. It was not to theologians and ecclesiastics that the *Fioretti* made appeal, but to the unlearned Italian public. None, or very few, of the stories in the *Fioretti* are strictly authentic, they are the work of pious imagination reflecting the impression made by "the most Italian of the Saints."

Even within the tales of the Fioretti there is felt the difference so well pointed out by Sabatier in his introduction to the I cannot do better than quote some of his words. Latin Actus. "When one starts reading the Actus," he says—and, of course, it is the same with the Fioretti-" you have the impression, if you go on right to the end, that the style is the same, but your attention, so vividly arrested at the beginning, gradually relaxes as you approach the end. If the reader attempts to analyse the reason for this progressive fatigue, he will notice that though the style is the same in the second half there is a different inspiration." In the first half, says Sabatier, the characters are all alive and different, but in the second half, which treats of the Friars in the March of Ancona, there is something of a copybook manner: each of the brothers has a name, but, to quote him again, "we feel that these names are only a concession to our intellectual weakness, for they all have the same physiognomy, the same voice, the same visions. They are no longer beside us on the earth, we perceive them bathed in mysterious light, continually lost in contemplation. . . . Brother Ugolino of Monte Giorgio only knew how to paint one figure, that of the saint caught up in the air, whose life is a procession of visions which leave him in great joy, remansit mirabiliter consolatus, until yet another comes more intense than the others, some-

3

times punctuated with diabolical intermezzos, after which the Friar passes away, totus letus et consolatus transiuit ad Dominum." 1 So far Sabatier, whose immediate conclusion is that as Brother Ugolino only knows how to invent an ecstatic he could not have invented the earlier tales of Francis and his immediate com-When he goes on to claim Brother Leo as their author, I venture to think he goes too far. What I do see is the difference between Francis of Assisi and John of La Verna. In the Actus-Fioretti we do not, as I think, come face to face with either, in the way that we do for a moment come face to face with Francis in the few pages of Leo's Intentio Regule. What we get in the Fioretti, and it is a historical fact of the greatest significance, is the impression, the very different impression, made on contemporary thought and feeling by Francis and by John of La Verna respectively. The freshness, the vivacity, the individual poignant outlook on human life and the world we live in, which characterise the tales of Francis in the Fioretti—they are something derived from a personality fresh, vivacious, individual, poignant, something that the men of the thirteenth century had had no experience of apart from St. Francis himself.2 The Fioretti does not give us a portrait of St. Francis; it is rather an already mixed palette, giving us some of the colours with which we must light up the formal outlines given us in I Celano.

Of one thing we must be on our guard. The Fioretti is popular vernacular literature. I do not suppose that the older type of controversial Protestantism or Rationalism ever treated it seriously. But the stories in the Actus in their mediæval Latin are embodied both in the Speculum Vitae and in the Conformities of Bartholomew of Pisa, and it is well for us to remember that two hundred years ago they made a most unfavourable impression, not only on the ribald author of the Alcoran des Cordeliers, but also upon the serious and painstaking Bollandists. Fashions may change again: only the historic truth has permanent attraction, and what we now think of as pretty fancies may come once again to be regarded as puerile. "Historic truth" includes, of course, truth of apprehension as well as truth of

¹ Sabatier, Actus b. Francisci, pp. iv-vii.

² Homo alterius seculi uidebatur (I Celano 36 and 82).

presentation: I cannot think that historic truth in the case of the Wolf of Gubbio is served by turning the converted Wolf into a robber Baron who at the intervention of St. Francis commuted his irregular depredations into a small poll-tax to be paid regularly by the citizens! What perhaps may not be so familiar is the impression made by the famous story on the author of the Alcoran. He considered that if the Wolf nodded its head in token of assent to St. Francis, and presently gave Francis its paw in token of amity, so rational a proceeding proved that it must have been the Devil, with whom no doubt the Founder of the Begging Friars was in league! 1

I have tried to bring out the characteristics of our chief authorities for the Life of St. Francis. There are several other minor sources which should not be forgotten. In addition to the famous notice of the earliest Brothers and of the Poor Ladies given by Jacques de Vitry in 1216, the account of Francis preaching at Bologna on the 15th of August, 1220, and exhorting his audience to live in peace by Thomas of Spalato, and the wonderful picture of the Congregation at the Portiuncula on 23 May, 1221, by Jordan of Giano, with Elias managing everything and "the Brother," i.e., Francis, sitting silent in the middle—in addition to these there are a certain number of stories which resemble the Fioretti in that they do not come directly from Brother Leo. Most of them are represented more or less in 2 Celano, but for some we have the Celanese story in an earlier form, and in a few cases they do not appear in 2 Celano I venture to think that all the valuable material coming under this head will be found in the few stories peculiar to the Codex of San Antonio at Rome, and the sections 140-169 and 184-198 of Mr. A. G. Little's MS., together with the stories in the Perugia Legend which are not represented in 2 Celano. For instance, Per. 84a = Spec. S. 116 (the story of Francis's clothes catching fire) does not use the word femoralia but bracce: here Leo's word is always femoralia. The two striking tales I quoted in the Commemoration Book at the end of my Paper (pp. 60-61) are non-Leonine and come from the Codex of San Antonio, as does the tale of Brother Stephen who obeyed

¹ Alcoran des Cordeliers, ed. of 1734, p. 215.

St. Francis too literally, and was rebuked for want of "discretion." The well-known tale of the parsley that Francis desired in his last illness, omitted in the Perugia Collection, is best told in *Little*, 187.

But none of these subsidiary sources are a substitute for I Celano, which must remain our indispensable framework, or, as I have called it, the skeleton. I will therefore conclude by calling attention to what I think is its gravest defect, a defect all the more curious because the work is so written that it does not inevitably strike the reader. The chief fact about St. Francis is the rise of the Brothers Minor, an organisation which expanded in some ten years from being a band of obscure devotees to a great Society spread all over Christendom. In 1209 when Francis was informally approved by Innocent III there were about a dozen Friars in all. Francis died in 1226, and the last two years of his life were those of a more and more helpless His public activity falls, therefore, between 1209 and 1223, in November of which latter year the final Rule was approved. How much does I Celano tell us about this decisive period?

The answer is "very little," and what there is is not organically related to the main story. Of course, Thomas of Celano is not to be too much blamed for this. He was not writing the Annales Minorum, but giving a sketch of St. Francis himself, his character and the miraculous graces vouchsafed to him, and at the same time he was keeping out of view, as much as was consistent with general faithfulness, any internal quarrels or scandals within the Order. Yet the rise of the Order to world-wide fame and importance in so few years during Francis's own lifetime is really an element in the Vita Francisci: we may surely say, as Dr. Johnson said of another but somewhat analogous subject, "Sir, I could wish for more."

I Celano, I-35, tells the story of the early days of Francis and his Movement, down to the visit of the little band to Rome in 1209 and their approval by Innocent III. If we make allowance for the turgid style, it is a plain, straightforward tale. The "second part" of I Celano, i.e., 88-151, tells the story of Francis's last two years, his death and canonisation. This also

is an intelligible narrative. It is the intermediate part, §§ 36-87 of Fr. Édouard d'Alençon's paragraphs, that is so formless. It ends with the Christmas at Greccio, which I take to be that of 1223, six weeks after the ratification of the Rule.1 In this whole central section there is no ordered chronology, no march of events. We gather that St. Francis and his little band first lived at Rivo Torto (42-44),2 after which they retired to the Portiuncula. About 1212 Francis essayed to go to the Holy Land, but storms drove his ship back to Ancona (55). Not long after he went to Spain, but had to come back because of illness (56). In 1219, or early in the following year, he got to the Holy Land and succeeded in having an interview with the Sultan (57). Then follows a miscellaneous collection of miracles, apparently belonging to various periods (58-72), then we hear of the happy relations between Francis and "Hostiensis," afterwards Gregory IX, first how he got the Poverello to preach before Honorius III at Rome, then how at Florence he kept him from a missionary journey in France, which we know from the Bishop of Ostia's movements (but not from Celano) must be dated in the spring of 1217 (73, 74); after this there is nothing datable till we come to the Christmas at Greccio. There is nothing about Francis resigning the official leadership, nothing about Cesarius of Speyer and the writing of what is now called the First Rule (though Celano quotes it twice), nothing about the writing of the Second Rule at Fonte Colombo and its subsequent confirmation by the Bull of Honorius, though all these things most distinctly belong to the Life of Francis as much as to the history of the Order. Thus just for the years during which St. Francis was an active force, when a vast movement was developing from year to year, Thomas of Celano presents us with a stained-glass figure, without modelling and without action. It is a great pity, and all the more so as the reminiscences of Brother Leo do less than one would think to fill up the gap. They belong mostly to the last two years, when Francis was ill and tired, and when the control of the whole Movement was passing out of his hands. I wish we knew more of the actions and the

¹ Tertio anno ante gloriosi obitus sui (1 Cel. 84).

² This was in 1209 (I Cel. 43).

policy of Peter of Catania, the first Vicar-General, who died in March, 1221. I wish we knew something about Elias, taken neither from his enemies nor from his flatterers. I wish some one would try and collect the materials for a new picture of Francis in this central period of which I have been speaking, a picture of Francis after he has gathered together a band of enthusiastic disciples and before he had become a stigmatised invalid. Much of the highest value will not be included in such a sketch. It will not contain his high courage and serenity in suffering, it will not contain the Canticum Solis, that dazzling burst of sunshine out of a dark cloud, with all its significance for the vernacular literature of succeeding ages. But it will bring into needed prominence the connection of the man and his work, and put Francis where he belongs, in the open air, in the element when he is least a pathological study. In the very earliest days, so it seems to me, he was not quite sane: from after the time of his first illness and subsequent "conversion" down to the time that Bernard of Quintavalle joined him he was recovering serenity and poise, but had not yet fully attained it. In the last two years there is for me, I confess, too much tragedy: the life of Francis during this period presents the spectacle that the Middle Ages in general, and the religious public of the Middle Ages in particular, so much enjoyed to contemplate in other people. The tragedy is relieved and lit up by splendid gleams of light, but it remains something unnatural and unhealthy. In the interval between the early days and the last two years the atmosphere is different. We see life and energy and clarity of aim united in a great movement that quickened the pulse of half Europe, and which had in itself so many elements of life that it remains vigorous to this day.

For reconstructing this period we are thrown back on our own endeavours, there is no ancient source we can look to as a sure guide. The skeleton furnished by *I Celano* is here a mass of fragments, the Rolls and Notes of Leo and his companions tell us little, and they too are detached anecdotes. And, as I have ventured to suggest, the *Fioretti* should be used not so much for form as for colour, not as pictures to be copied, but as

a palette which tells us the hues which we may dare, with discretion, to employ.

F. C. BURKITT.

20 January, 1931.

NOTE ON THE DATING OF SPEC. PERF. 45

This is the tale of how Francis had been preaching in a cathedral, and how after the sermon the Bishop, who had been present, said some words in which he spoke kindly but patronisingly of Francis, whereupon Francis, instead of taking offence, said the Bishop had very well distinguished between the precious (i.e., the Gospel message) and the vile (i.e., himself). The story occurs in Sp. L. 13, Per. 9, and 2 Cel. 141, all of which place the occurrence at Terni (Interamne), while Sp. S. has a corruption, emended in the northern group of MSS into Rieti. This itself, it may be remarked, is a proof of the late and inferior character of Sp. S. Further, in Sp. S. the Bishop says "this poor and illiterate man, Francis," while in the others the Bishop does not name him. Here again Sp. S. is inferior: the text in Sp. L., Per., and 2 Cel. implies that he had never heard before of the Poverello, and did not know his name! Therefore the tale must be dated early. But Terni only had a Bishop from 1217 onwards. Hence the incident may be safely dated in 1217 itself.







FRA ANTONIO'S COPPER-PLATE



VIEW OF FONTE COLOMBO

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Ш

FONTE COLOMBO AND ITS TRADITIONS 1

I

Fonte Colombo is a little Franciscan Convent three or four miles south-west of Rieti, in the very centre of Italy. It was at Fonte Colombo that St. Francis composed the final form of the Franciscan Rule in September, 1223, having gone there for the purpose because it was a retired and lonely spot, where he could meditate undisturbed. It still retains much of its original simplicity, as it lies remote from the high road, embosomed in a wood on the edge of a deep valley, which runs up into the hills from the plain of Rieti. Before describing the Convent and the traditions now cherished there, let us see what earlier writers say about it. Let us begin with Wadding's Annals, published in 1625. An account of Fonte Colombo is to be found in vol. i, p. 274, which, however, is taken word for word from the source there referred to, viz., F. Gonzaga's History, published in 1587.2 I quote Gonzaga's account practically in full, as it is the starting-point of our investigation. indicated the situation, he says (vol. i, p. 188):-

"The Church of this Convent was consecrated by his Eminence Cardinal Almannus on July 19, A.D. 1450. This is the celebrated place in which the Rule of the Brothers Minor, written by the aforesaid blessed Father Francis at the dictation of the

¹ A paper read before the Society on 13 December, 1927, at University College, London.

² F. Gonzaga, De Origine Seraphicae Religionis . . . de Regularis Obseruanciae institutione, Rome, 1587.

Holy Spirit, was approved and accepted by the whole Order after the Voice had come from Heaven telling them to accept it as it was (simpliciter), when Father Brother Elias (then Vicar-General of the whole Franciscan Order) and many other Provincial Ministers were conspiring against it.

"It is not easy to estimate how greatly this sacred abode is held in honour by the neighbouring population both from the exemplary life of its inmates, who are ten in number and are attached to the Reform,1 and also from the long residence of Francis in the place. For when a certain enormous tree hanging over the chapel of that sainted Father and bent down with snow threatened it with ruin, and the aged and anxious Father Fra Stefano da Molina, then Warden, wished to remove it lest its fall should shatter the whole building, all the peasants who were round about came together to cut it down. And when they could do little or nothing, and the situation was really alarming, the good Father Warden, calling the other Brothers together, betook himself to prayer. And lo, quite unexpectedly, when nothing was being touched, the tree so gently and softly came down upon the roof that without any danger, without even a tile broken or moved, it could be cut down!"

Gonzaga adds that this was regarded as a miracle, and that the event immensely increased the devotion of lay folk. A further cause of the reputation of Fonte Colombo (he adds) were the cures wrought by touching the habit of the blessed Father Thomas de Scarlino, which the Brothers had in their custody.

Thus we have here quite a full account of Fonte Colombo, written by one who had excellent opportunities of knowing all about the place, the Minister-General himself, who elsewhere (pp. 178 and 190) pays a tribute to the work of Stefano da Molina, a Spaniard who had inaugurated a general reform among Italian Franciscans during the sixteenth century. The habit of Thomas de Scarlino (also called Thomas of Florence), who died at Rieti in 1447, is still preserved at Fonte Colombo.

It will be noticed that the reference to the composition of

¹ Reformationique student, i.e., they belonged to the Reform movement instituted in the Roman Province by Stefano da Molina, and favoured by Gonzaga, himself the Minister-General.

FONTE COLOMBO

the Rule in 1223 does not depart from the regular Franciscan tradition. In as few words as possible Gonzaga enumerates the main points of the story of the Voice from Heaven which came while Francis was expostulating with Elias: it is the same story that we read in Sabatier's Speculum, § 1, or in Verba Francisci, § 4. That Francis composed the Rule dictante Spiritu Sancto was always the pious opinion of the Friars, but Gonzaga's words here do not point to anything more than an assertion of the Seraphic Father's plenary inspiration.

Thus the two chief traditions connected with Fonte Colombo, according to Gonzaga in 1587, are: (1) the Voice from Heaven when Francis was talking with Elias, (2) a tale about a great Tree which fell and miraculously did no damage. The Tree fell when Stefano da Molina was an old man, say about 1550. If anyone were to begin to talk about the sacred Tree of Fonte Colombo we should at once think of Stefano and his prayer.

The church consecrated in 1450 is that which forms part of the main convent buildings. The little chapel of St. Mary Magdalen, which was in such danger from the falling tree, is on the actual edge of the narrow valley, and St. Francis's Cave is in the rock below that. The chapel and cave with the tiny Oratory of St. Michael form the Sanctuary of Fonte Colombo, the part associated with the actual presence of Francis. A description of them before the church of 1450 was built is to be found in the document called "The Acts of St. Francis in the Valley of Rieti," a collection of the tales about the Saint which belong to that region contained in Cod. 679 of the Assisi Library: it was edited by F. Pennacchi in 1911. The MS. was written in 1416 and is possibly the original composition of the scribe. It is of no independent historical value for the tales of St. Francis, but the writer knows the localities, and his description of the actual sanctuaries of Fonte Colombo is good enough to-day for a guide-book. He even mentions the twenty-two steps from the Oratory of St. Michael to the crack in the solid rock where Francis stayed and meditated. Further, he gives in a vigorous style the haste with which Francis when ready leapt from his

¹ It is probably by a mere slip that it calls the chapel of the Magdalen the chapel of the B.V.M. (p. 25).

cave into the Oratory and called to Brother Leo to bring pen and ink and write down the Rule at his dictation. But there is nothing about a venerated Tree, though he tells us that the cliff was nemorosa and arboribus septa.

It may further be added that in Professor A. G. Little's MS., § 143, a section which also appears in a shortened form in the MS. of San Antonio at Rome, § 78, there is a story that Leo said that when he and Brother Bonizius were alone with Francis in monte Ranerii, i.e., at Fonte Colombo, Francis used to go away to pray whenever a chapter of the Rule was finished, asking Christ to change or add whatever He wished, so that every chapter of the Rule was corrected ab ore Christi in uoce audibili, and that the Rule thus corrected was handed over by Francis to the Ministers. This tale is not in Leo's own tract called Intentio Regule or in the Verba Francisci, but it comes from the circle that appealed to Leo's reminiscences, i.e., perhaps from Conrad da Offida. Here again it is only a tale of a Voice, not of an Apparition, and there is nothing at all in it about a Tree.

11

It is time now to pay a visit ourselves to Fonte Colombo. It is approached by a steep footpath, by the side of which are old pilgrim-shrines, as in so many Italian paths leading to holy places. The shrines, each like an altar with a picture at the back, are now in bad repair. The first has lost its picture altogether. second is also badly damaged, but enough is left of the design to enable us to reconstitute the picture even in detail. on the right is a little chapel standing on the very edge of a cliff: it is evidently St. Mary Magdalen's Chapel at Fonte Colombo, the one said to have been built by Francis himself, which the tree fell upon without damaging it. In the centre of the picture is a great Tree, within which is the figure of Christ surrounded by cherubs: He holds in His hands a Book, and is obviously revealing the Rule. Below on the spectator's right is Francis on his knees with his hand stretched out to receive the Rule. Behind is a kneeling figure, obviously Brother Bonizius, for on the opposite side is Leo, seated, diligently transcribing

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the Rule with his eyes on his pen. Below the tree, and seen at some distance, is a group of four Friars expressing astonishment: one of them is actually making off in terror. The style of the painting is (I should think) "baroque," rather than "rococo"; the gestures are natural, not affected. It is very difficult to suggest dates for this kind of thing, but I should be inclined to say something earlier than 1650.1

As regards the meaning there can be, I should think, but little doubt. It is the same scene as that of the opening chapter of the Speculum Perfectionis. It cannot be the original dictating of the Rule to Francis by Christ, for Leo and the other Companion are present. It cannot be Christ correcting the Rule, in accordance with the tradition mentioned above, for other Friars are present, though at a distance. The presence of these Friars in fact compels us to conclude that the picture depicts the story of the Voice from Heaven confirming the Rule, which confounded Elias and the discontented Provincial Ministers. After all, it is highly appropriate that the memory of this story should be cherished at Fonte Colombo, the very place where the voice was heard.

Proceeding from this picture we follow the path up to the convent itself. A couple of shrines with pictures flank the way, but the subjects are ordinary—a Madonna, etc.—and call for no remark. At the top the convent church stands in front, with the entrance to the special sanctuaries on the pilgrim's left hand, outside the church on the edge of the lateral valley, which runs into the hills nearly due south. The interior of the church is plain: it has been rendered still plainer by a careful restoration lately carried out. The chief object of interest to the visitor is a large wooden carving in high relief, formerly the reredos of the Altar, but now exposed to view on the left-hand side of the church.² This has the same subject as the picture described above, except that the Fonte Colombo chapel

¹ The sketch reproduced (p. 51) was drawn the evening after my visit, from notes jotted down on the spot. I had no camera, and even if I had had one the condition of the picture is in places very bad. I was particularly careful to note the attitudes of the figures and their relative size.

² I.e., on the spectator's right hand as he faces the altar (Epistle side).

is less prominent, and Bonizio is seen in the background, as quite a little figure, instead of being close behind St. Francis and as large as he is. The spectator-friars are four in number, as in the picture, but are smaller in proportion. On the carving itself are a few words stating that it was executed in 1646 by Fra Giovanni da Pisa.

When the visit is made to the sanctuary, which the Actus in Valle Reatina calls "the Franciscan Sinai," after seeing the chapel of the Magdalen one is conducted down to the chapel or Oratory of St. Michael, from which a trap-door leads to the Sacro Speco, the little crack in the rock where Francis stayed fasting and meditating before he dictated the Rule. In this chapel of St. Michael is a copper-plate engraving by one Fra Giovanni Antonio-da-Padova, representing the same subject as the carving, but there is a difference in the treatment, for Bonizio has altogether dropped out, and Christ stands, in full length, on the top of the stump of a tree that has lost the greater part of its trunk. That stump is still in existence. Close by the chapel of St. Michael are the little rock-shelters which Leo and Bonizio are said to have occupied, and by them is to be seen the remains of an old Ilex, walled in a sort of niche, which was built in 1660 to keep it from being picked to pieces by the faithful. It was broken by the snow, we are told, in 1645, and it was the then Warden, one Giacomo from Grosseto, who had had the excellent idea of having the broken-off part carved by John of Pisa.2

After what I have already said, it would naturally be inferred that the walled-in stump is the remains of the miraculous Tree, the top of which fell in the days of Stefano da Molina. But no; that is not the present-day tradition of Fonte Colombo! Stefano is altogether forgotten, and the Tree has become St. Francis's Ilex, in the branches of which Christ used to appear to St. Francis and dictate to him the Rule. As I have already pointed out,

¹ B. Spila, Memorie storiche della Provincia Riformata Romana (Rome, 1890), tells us that John of Pisa, the woodcarver, was a lay-brother, while Fra Antony-of-Padua was a friar of some note as an artist in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

² Spila, i, 59.

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there is no old tradition of this kind connecting Francis with any special Tree, nor do old descriptions of Fonte Colombo know anything about a Tree venerated there except Stefano da Molina's Tree. I conclude that the modern tradition arises entirely from a wrong interpretation of venerated works of art.

III

The tale of the Voice from Heaven rests on evidence of an entirely different kind from that of St. Francis's Ilex. I have elsewhere attempted an explanation of it on the assumption that it really does go back to the reminiscences of Brother Leo. But as the *Miscellanea* published in honour of Cardinal Ehrle's eightieth birthday are not in everybody's hands, I shall venture to indicate my solution again in these pages.¹

The story as told in the Speculum and in the Verba Francisci comes to this, that the Provincial Ministers of the Brothers Minor were afraid that the new Rule that Francis was making would be too severe for them, that they went with Elias (who then was Vicar-General, Francis having resigned his official position as head) and invaded Francis's retirement while he was composing the Rule; that when Francis understood the unworthy attitude of his followers he indignantly appealed to Christ, and a Voice from Heaven proclaimed in answer that the Rule was not Francis's but Christ's, and that it was to be observed "to the letter, to the letter, sine glosa, sine glosa, sine glosa."

It will perhaps be asked whether it be worth while to waste time on this story. I shall be told that it is an obviously incredible tale of an apocryphal Voice, a tale neither historically probable nor particularly attractive in itself. There are, however, special reasons for investigating it: in fact, the reason why I went to Fonte Colombo was that I might see for myself the spot of which the tale is told.

In the first place the story comes down to us in particularly good company. That it is placed at the head of Sabatier's *Speculum* is not, indeed, decisive, for that work in its present form is not earlier than 1318. But the *Speculum* has it from the

¹ See Miscellanea Ehrle (Rome, 1924), vol. iii, pp. 14-22.

Verba Francisci, a collection of stories used by Ubertino da Casale and by Angelo da Clareno, and it is also given in Delorme's Perugia Legend. The Verba Francisci is definitely stated in Isid. 1/73 to be the work of Brother Leo: the only reason for doubting this would be that the story as it stands is too incredible to have come direct from an honest eye-witness. We are, therefore, almost compelled to scrutinise it closely, if we are to make anything depend on the testimony of the alleged writings of Leo.

It was the repetition of ad litteram, ad litteram—sine glosa, sine glosa, that first suggested to me the idea that the story had something to do with an echo. Well, is there any echo at Fonte Colombo? In what surroundings did tradition place the tale? The Speculum gives no topographical detail: Francis with his two companions are "in a certain mountain," and Elias and the Ministers come "near the place where Blessed Francis was standing." But there is another form of the story, which also professes to come from Brother Leo: this is given by Ubertino in his Arbor Vite (published in 1305). Ubertino says he had it by word of mouth from Conrad of Offida, and Conrad lived for many years at Assisi and saw much of Leo who also lived there.

Here is the story as told by Ubertino (Arbor, 222a I = E iiia): "The holy Brother Leo told and wrote thus, that when he was fasting with Blessed Francis for to write down the Rule, the spirit of the Devil which from the beginning has raised stumbling-blocks against his most sacred Rule moved with human fear a multitude of the Ministers and others who were reckoned discreet to assemble at Rieti, and they came to Brother Elias and told him to go up with a message from them to the Holy Man and say to him what follows. And when he had said that he dared not go to him, because he was afraid of being stricken with a severe malediction by the Saint, all the more because he had never done anything with so much spirit as he now exhibited in getting the Rule written down, after a long discussion they finally agreed that he should go together with them.

"But because he was always timid about blame from the Saint, by God's providence he would not go up the mountain

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with those Brothers, but going together with them through a deep valley, high up above which the Saint's cell was visible, he arrived below the cell itself, having decided in his state of fear and reverence to call the Saint three times by name, and if he did not answer to go back again.

"But at his first shout Francis wondering what it was came out of his cell to the precipice of the rock, and seeing such a multitude of the Brothers standing with Elias in the valley, asked in surprise what he wanted. Elias, speaking for all of them, answered with a loud voice: 'These are Ministers and discreet Brothers of Italy who know thy vigour of spirit and have heard that thou are having a new Rule written down, and they declare for themselves and for others that they do not wish thee to have anything written that will bind them, unless thou put it before them first.'

"Hearing this the Holy Man with a great groan lifted up his voice to Heaven saying very loudly, 'Lord, dost thou hear what these are already saying?' Then the ever-faithful Jesus, in pity for the anxiety of the Saint and willing to make a full confirmation for a future generation, cried with a loud voice from Heaven, so that a clear voice was perceived and heard through valley and mountain, saying 'Francis, I am Jesus who speaks with thee from Heaven: the Rule has been made by Me, and thou hast put in it nothing of thine. I know the help I am willing to give and the weakness of nature, and considering this I know that the Rule can be kept very well, and so as it is written I wish it to be kept, to the letter, without any gloss: and those who are unwilling, let them draw back, for I wish to change nothing in it.'

"Having heard the thunder of the voice of Christ the Holy Man exulted in spirit and said to the brethren who were standing in the valley, 'Have ye heard the Blessed Jesus, my Brothers? Do ye wish that I should make it to be said to you again?'"

After this the Brothers withdrew trembling, and Ubertino adds: "These things are testified by that holy Brother Leo who was present at it all and heard our Lord Jesus Christ speaking. Who then will be any further incredulous?"

Those who have themselves visited Fonte Colombo will

recognise how exactly the topographical details of Ubertino's story fit the place. Just by the Sacro Speco, where Francis was, is a rock that juts out into the valley. Below, on the other side of the little stream, is the point where the path begins to ascend in zigzags up the hill: that would be the point to which Elias and the Ministers came. From the rock that point is visible, and as a matter of fact there is a splendid echo: if you shout, so as to be heard down below, at least two syllables are repeated. I can quite understand how in the circumstances Brother Leo did persuade himself that he had heard an answer to his beloved master's appeal to Heaven! The actual words ascribed in the various forms of the story to the heavenly Voice I must regard as due to Leo's imagination, or (in the case of Ubertino's version) to that of Conrad of Offida, but I can quite understand that Leo would believe he had heard something more than a natural echo, when he recalled this dramatic conversation in its wild and romantic setting.

Consequently I see no reason why we should not accept the tale as told in the *Speculum* and the *Verba Francisci* as being Leo's own reminiscences of a scene at which he was present, and therefore I continue to regard the collection of tales called *Verba Francisci*, as quoted by Angelo Clareno and edited by Fr. Lemmens in *Documenta Antiqua Franciscana*, i, 100-104, as the work of Leo himself.

IV

The last point I wish to raise concerning Fonte Colombo and its works of art seems to me curious and somewhat obscure, but not devoid of interest. How and whence did the artists at Fonte Colombo get the designs for their representations? Who gave Brother John of Pisa the design for his reredos?

This may seem a very out-of-the-way question to ask, and certainly we do not possess enough material to answer it properly, but I hope to be able to show that this design must really have a curious history and that it goes back to very early days.

I think we may neglect the copper-plate by Fra John Antony. It is clearly derived from the reredos. The only point of interest







GIOTTO'S FRESCO AT ASSISI ILLUSTRATING BONAVENTURA X

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on a tree that had lost its top, but had sprouted anew. I think we may infer that this part of the design really does mirror the state of things between 1550 and 1645, i.e., when Stefano da Molina's Tree had lost its top but was still alive. Fra Antony, of course, did not sketch the real tree: besides, it was already dead in his day. But he lived while it was still a living tradition that the Miraculous Tree of Fonte Colombo was a Tree that had lost its main stem, so he represents it so.

Whether the Altar-piece painted on the Pilgrim's Way 1 or the wooden carved Reredos be the older, I cannot say. The design is much the same in both. When I was on the spot I came to the conclusion that the picture, or at least the design of the picture, was the older, and that any peculiarity in the woodcarving was caused by the shape of the actual block of wood. For instance, the picture, like most Altar-pieces, is taller than it is broad, but the carving, followed in this by Fra Antony's copper-plate, is broader than it is high. The design of the picture I have already described. It seems to me a very admirable composition, in the sense of indicating all the elements, in due subordination, of the tale to be told. In the centre, high up, is our Lord. He appears in (or above) a Tree: I take this to indicate that the whole scene takes place in a wood. I see no sign that the artist is indicating any particular tree, but he wishes us to know that it is out of doors and in a wood. The actual place is indicated by the little chapel, which stands on a schematised cliff: it is just as if the artist had written on the canvas "what is drawn here took place at Fonte Colombo in the wood below the chapel." St. Francis is on his knees in adoration, so is Bonizio behind him; but while Bonizio's attitude is mere adoration, Francis is occupied with the special matter depicted: his hand is stretched out to receive the Book, obviously containing the Rule, from Christ. Meanwhile Leo is doing his duty. Though our Lord is visibly present, Leo is seated and his eyes are on his pen: he is writing the Rule down. Equally admirable are the Friars in the background. On the

¹ It stands, we may note, just where a little spring comes out: it is, therefore, a sacred spot.

left is Elias, making off in terror; in the middle are two others, evidently too astonished to move. On the right is a young Friar who obviously will never give any trouble to his superiors: he joins his hands in an attitude of devotion. Thus all the details arise out of the story and help to explain the situation. You would say that the artist, or his immediate predecessor, if our existing fresco be a copy, got his design by reading the story in the *Speculum*, aided by his knowledge of the ground.

Perhaps so: yet the student of Italian art cannot help asking what is the relation of the design of our picture to that of one of the famous frescoes of Giotto in the upper church of San Francesco at Assisi. In this picture we have a building on the left hand; below it are four Friars in astonishment at the sight of Francis with his arms outspread, apparently borne up upon a cloud that hides the lower part of his figure. He, Francis, is intently listening to Christ, who appears in the upper right-hand corner of the picture. Christ is, so to speak, leaning down from heaven; but immediately below Him is a Tree.

Before discussing the design of this famous fresco, which was painted about 1295, it will be convenient to describe the corresponding picture in a volume of copper-plates of the Life of St. Francis, published in 1594 (B.M. 11409 aa, 24). Here the whole action is represented as taking place inside a building, a sort of classical hall. In the left corner are the Friars. St. Francis is elevated in the air in the middle, Christ appears as if in the cornice: immediately below Him is an open door, through which in the distance appears one Tree, so that (as in Giotto's fresco) Christ is immediately over the Tree. If we compare the three designs, it is evident that they have a common element; and the evidence of the conventionalised tree in the copper-plate just mentioned does suggest that the position of the tree in the fresco of 1295 is not accidental—in other words, that the original design showed Christ appearing in a Tree, as in the Fonte Colombo picture! 1

¹ The ancient MS. at San Antonio in Rome contains at the beginning of the volume the *Legenda Maior* of Bonaventura illustrated by eighty-six pictures, of which No. 70 is labelled *F. in oratione existens uisus est subleuatus a terra*. It is said to be similar to the Giotto fresco, but that Christ is not introduced.

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On the other hand, it must be remembered that Giotto's fresco follows Bonaventura, X (§ 143) very closely. Bonaventura says: "The Man of God when alone used to fill the woods (nemora) with his sighs. . . . There also he was sometimes heard by Brothers piously observing him. . . . There he was seen at night praying with his hands stretched out in the manner of a cross with his whole body lifted up from the earth and enwrapped in a sort of shining cloud." Giotto follows this passage too closely for any suspicion that he is really representing another scene.

And yet—and yet—it is undeniable that there is a most remarkable resemblance between Giotto's fresco and the humble, now half-obliterated picture at Fonte Colombo. This picture is in any case remarkable as perhaps the only painting of ancient times, before the modern revival of interest in Franciscan origins, which illustrates any of the tales specially dear to the halfrebellious Zelanti. It is clear that its subject is the tale told in Sabatier's Speculum Perfectionis, § 1. Sabatier himself was at one time inclined to think that Giotto's fresco really was meant to represent that scene rather than Bonaventura, X. The researches of Fr. B. Marinangeli, custodian of the Sacro Convento, largely disproved Sabatier's attractive theory, but the resemblance between the two pictures remains, whatever their meaning may be. That the artist at Fonte Colombo was directly influenced by Giotto's work at Assisi I venture to think improbable.

Giotto's design is an illustration of the words of Bonaventura, X, quoted above. But what are the sources of Bonaventura, X? The main source, no doubt, is 2 Celano 95, from which, for instance, comes the words nemora replebat gemitibus and the repeated ibi. But there is nothing in Celano about the Brothers piously observing Francis or seeing him toto corpore subleuatus a terra: Celano's suspendebatur contemplationis dulcedine (2 Cel. 98) only means interior elevation of soul. Bonaventura writes as though describing repeated experiences of the Man of God, but is it not possible that by the time when Francis was seen to

¹ See Opuscules de Critique Historique xviii (t. iii, p. 105).

be elevated from the earth, he means the occasion when Christ revealed to him the Rule? When we read the reminiscences of Brother Leo and the invectives of Ubertino we easily forget that all the Friars, even the most relaxed, professed to venerate the Rule by which their lives were at least supposed to be governed. That it had been revealed to Francis from Heaven was the general belief; it was the Book of Life, the Marrow of the Gospel, the Key of Paradise. This enthusiastic reverence was quite compatible with practical disobedience to it, especially when permitted by the highest ecclesiastical Authority. The Zelanti wanted really to obey it literally, but all the Friars professed to be bound to it. Had it not been given "as if from the mouth of God," to use the words of Bonaventura himself?

The tale told in Verba Francisci 4, and also independently by Ubertino, the tale with which Sabatier's Speculum opens, where the Voice from Heaven declares to Elias that the Rule must be obeyed to the letter, was not, I should think, very popular in the Sacro Convento at any time. But by a natural evolution the representation of this scene at Fonte Colombo is indistinguishable from the mere giving of the Rule by Christ to Francis. Does not something of this kind underly the discreet sentences of Bonaventura? Are not his words, quoted above, an intentionally vague reminiscence of the scene recorded in Spec. Perf., § 1? In Giotto's fresco, which illustrates Bonaventura, X, Christ is speaking to St. Francis. What is Christ saying? The art of Giotto and his pupils had gone a long way from the naïve convention, according to which scrolls come out of the mouths of the principal figures. But if there were such a scroll coming out of the mouth of Christ in fresco No. 12 of the Upper Church at Assisi, I think the words would not be ad litteram, ad litteram, sine glosa, sine glosa, but the still more familiar and less contentious phrase Regula et uita Minorum Fratrum hec est, scilicet Domini nostri Jesu Christi sanctam Euangelium observare viuendo in obedientia sine proprio et in castitate. In other words, the subject is not "St. Francis in ecstasy" generally, but "St. Francis in ecstasy on the occasion of Christ revealing to him the Franciscan Rule." And, as a last remark, we may note that Giotto's spectator is on the ground:

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he views the scene, so to speak, from the point of view of Elias, at the bottom of the valley, while the Fonte Colombo pictures view the scene from the point of view of Leo (and Francis) on the hill-side.

I venture to suggest that we are compelled to some such ideas about Giotto's fresco, and the passage in *Bonaventura* that it so closely follows, by the curious and otherwise inexplicable resemblances between the design of this famous and ancient masterpiece of Italian art and the much later and humbler illustrations of Franciscan legend that still adorn the sanctuaries of Fonte Colombo.

F. C. BURKITT.



IV

BROTHER GILES OF PERUGIA 1

Blessed Giles, companion of St. Francis, was among the first four of the Brothers Minor. He died at Perugia on St. George's day, 23 April, 1262; he had been fifty-two years to the day in "religion," so that he must have joined Francis in 1209 or 1210.

He is known for his whole-hearted devotion to the original idea of Franciscan Poverty and for his independence of character; he was more especially venerated by his own generation. for his ecstatic seizures. It was said that naughty boys would cry out to him in the streets of Perugia, "Paradise, Paradise," so that they might see the old man go off into a trance. It is with these trances and visions that this paper is particularly concerned. Queer stories naturally collect about a man of retiring life and strong character. The most famous tale of Giles is that told in chapter xxxiv of the Fioretti (= Actus, 46), how St. Louis, King of France, came himself in the guise of a pilgrim to Perugia to pay a visit to holy Giles. Louis knocked at the door of the Brothers' dwelling and sent in a message that a poor pilgrim wanted to see Brother Giles. Giles at once knew by the spirit who it was and rushed out to meet his visitor. two fell into each other's arms like old friends and embraced one another with every sign of affection—and then they parted, Louis on his way and Giles back into the house, without either having said a single word! When the king had gone and the Brothers learned who Giles' visitor was, they asked Giles why he said nothing to the great man, and Giles replied that as they

¹ A paper read before the Society at University College, London, on 23 May, 1930.

embraced one another the heart of each was revealed fully to the other by the light of the Divine Wisdom, so that they had no need of the noise of words. You may remember that the late Professor Moriarty and Mr. Sherlock Holmes had a somewhat similar experience, in fact, they knew each other's mind without embracing! It is a pity, from the point of view of mere history, that St. Louis of France never came within a hundred miles of Perugia in all his life. The only serious historical conclusion that can be extracted from this famous tale of Giles and St. Louis is that a person upon whom such a tale could be fathered must have been a remarkable character, one it is well worth while trying to know something about.

I have now to say a few words about those who have worked before me at the Life of Giles, and particularly Paul Sabatier and Mr. Walter Seton. With regard to Sabatier it may be said that he had done his great work before he died, and that Franciscan investigation has now proceeded to a further stage; but for all that he remains a curiously arresting figure, a stimulating guide when one is able to follow him, and a most instructive sign-post or criterion—I hardly know the word to use—when one ventures to differ from his conclusions. What I always feel about Sabatier's work is, that to express one's reasons for dissent from him leads one direct to the very heart of the subject.

There are two extant Lives of Brother Giles, a "Long Life" and a "Short Life." The "Long Life" is to be found in the "Chronicle of the XXIV Generals" (written about 1369), the "Short Life" was first discovered and published by the late Fr. Lemmens in Documenta Antiqua Franciscana, vol. i, and has since been edited from another MS. by Walter Seton. The two Lives are not independent: either the "Long Life" is a compilation incorporating the "Short Life," or the "Short Life" has been extracted from the "Long Life." Mr. Seton 1 gave excellent reasons for the priority of the "Short Life": my only quarrel with his book is that he does not seem to me to trust his own decision, and in his account

¹ Blessed Giles of Assisi, by Walter W. Seton (British Society of Franciscan Studies, vol. viii), Manchester, 1918. In this book the "Short Life" is given in full from Oxf. cod. Canonici 528, a rather better text than the S. Isidoro MS. used by Lemmens.

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of Giles gives almost equal prominence to what comes from the "Short Life" and what comes from elsewhere.

Sabatier's point of view is to be found in the Introduction to his edition of the Actus B. Francisci, p. lviii. He there regrets that Lemmens should have thought himself obliged to identify the biography of Giles by Brother Leo with quelques pâles et insignificantes pages, i.e., with the "Short Life," which Sabatier himself regards as nothing more than a résumé "at the fourth or fifth dilution."

I venture to think this criticism, though mistaken, does call for a reply. If Giles had a really interesting personality, Leo who knew him, Leo whose pen, directly or indirectly, has done so much to make the portrait of Francis live before our eyes, can hardly have contented himself with "a few pale and insignificant pages" in describing his friend Giles. Either the "Short Life" is not by Leo—notwithstanding the definite tradition in the MSS.—or the pages when read attentively are not pale and insignificant. It is the latter alternative that I wish to defend. As I indicated above, my quarrel with Mr. Seton's otherwise admirable book is that he does very little to remove the slight which Sabatier cast upon the "Short Life."

It is possible to guess what was in Sabatier's mind. What attracted him in Giles was his vein of sarcastic wit and his lifelong faithfulness to the ideal of Franciscan Poverty. He regarded both Leo and Giles as more consciously and consistently rebellious against the new state of things than I think they really were. It seems to me that in this matter they were chiefly anxious to be let alone: they were let alone, and they both died in peace and honour at a good old age among the Brothers Minor. I think Sabatier had too definite an opinion of what sort of a book a Life of Brother Giles by Brother Leo ought to have been: it would have emphasised the wit and the sarcasm, the inner freedom from all external authority fostered by real Franciscan poverty, and he would have expected shrewd comments on contemporary affairs and some hits first at Elias and then at Bonaventura. In the "pale and insignificant pages" of the Short Life there are none of these things. But I hope to point out that there is something better, the faithful

record of a man who had Visions, Visions possibly conditioned by abnormal nervous states, but yet without deteriorating effect on the moral character or the general sanity of the mind.

Before attempting to consider critically the "Short Life," I should like to make clear that I do not wish to deny the historicity of some, perhaps most, of the extra stories in the "Long Life" found in the "Chronicle of the XXIV Generals." There can be little doubt that Giles had a way of picturesque speech which found expression on rather unexpected occasions. The tale that when the news of Brother Elias's deposition came Giles fell flat upon the ground is authenticated by the life of Haymo, where the story is told in Latin. It tells us that when they came to pick Giles up he said, "No, I want to get as low as I can, seeing so great a man as that has fallen by leaping too high." It was a striking saying, forcibly put, but I should like to remark in passing that I am not sure it was sarcastic. Viewed in the light of Giles's life in general I fancy it rather illustrates his view of humility and simplicity. I would say the same of the story of Giles and the two cardinals, if it be really authentic (Chron., p. 95). Two cardinals came to see Giles, attracted by the fame of his holiness, and as they went away they begged Giles to pray for them. He replied that if they were so easy about their spiritual condition as they seemed to be, while in the enjoyment of so much wealth and comfort, they could have no need of his prayers, who did not feel safe though he was living a life of poverty and freedom from worldly care. I am quite prepared to believe that Giles neither meant to be rude nor sarcastic, but that his charitable logic led him to say what would have been sarcastic in a man of less simple humility.

In the "Long Life" the story of Giles's saying about the fall of Elias is one of those in which the words of Giles are given in the vernacular (in Italian, p. 102; in Latin, p. 80): Lasciami iacere, se io non salisco in alto non posso cadere. There are several others, seven in all, and it seems to me not improbable that they all may be derived from real reminiscences of Giles's way of speech. They show what may not too fancifully be called an early Franciscan habit of mind, a pleasure in simple rhymes and an innocent ingenuity in turning things of everyday

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life to spiritual use. I don't really know what was originally meant by the little song that begins *O mi fratello*, either originally or as spiritualised by Giles, but it is obviously a little secular song, something like one of the *stornelli* which are still made in Tuscany, and no doubt it had an attractive tune, at least to Giles's ears.¹

But all these things are of the nature of embroidery, they do not give us the main lines and principles of Giles's life. For this we must go to the "Short Life" and see what is there put before us. I propose to run through this document, first from a rather materialist and medical standpoint, and then look at the matter from a more sympathetic point of view. What strikes the reader in the first part of Giles's life is his restless activity. He visited Mount Gargano in Apulia and St. Nicholas of Bari in south Italy and Santiago de Compostella in the extreme north-west of Spain. He made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and the tale of how he lived by fetching water from a distance fits Acre in Palestine better than Ancona in Italy. He was unwilling to accept charity, if by any means he could work for his daily bread, even when staying in the house of a cardinal. Francis, we are told, regarded Giles as a man of God and a good example, a man to be trusted to go alone. Giles, for his part, preferred to live under obedience and to go where he was told to go, and we hear of him about 1217 at a Hermitage, i.e., a very small colony of Brothers Minor, at Fabrione near Perugia.

Here we begin to find a new state of things for Brother Giles. Facta est super eum manus Domini. This phrase, as used by Franciscans, means something very much like a stroke or fit (§ 6). He lost all sensation from his feet upwards: it seemed to him that his soul was being drawn out of his body. Later on he had another attack in his cell and was speechless. A third attack came to him in a church of St. Apollinaris, somewhere near Spoleto. In 1226, the year that Francis died, Giles was at Cetona near Chiusi. He had there another attack, which

¹ See Chron. XXIV General. 101. The verses run O mi fratello/o bel fratello/o amor fratello/fami un castello/che no abia pietra e ferro. O bel fratello/fami una cittade/che no abia pietra e ligname.

must have seemed to the general observer of much the same kind, for the Brothers heard him crying out and feared he was going to die. He, Giles, however, declared that it was no illness, but that he had seen a most comforting Vision. Nevertheless he remarked next day that his travels and his working days were over. He continued for about a fortnight in a semiecstatic condition, weak but exceedingly cheerful; after that he returned to a more normal state, but for the rest of his life he kept himself as quiet as possible, being much alone in his cell. Any excitement, even religious talk, was liable to send him off into a trance, and he was especially reticent about his visions and experiences.

The Life (§ 19) speaks of a journey "to the Saracens." Either this refers to his travels in the Holy Land early in his career, or he may have joined in the abortive mission to Moors in Tunis, which Wadding puts in 1219. In any case it was in the lifetime of St. Francis, some years before Giles's visions at Cetona.

Giles did not die of his visions, or, indeed, of any nervous complaint. He lived for some thirty-five years after his experience at Cetona, and died of bronchitis (or something like it) when he was at least 70 years old.

We will now come to Giles's own accounts of his visions. But before leaving the medical view, I should like to lay stress on his essential sanity. The age in which he lived believed in real objective visions, and Brother Giles was firmly convinced of the reality of his. But he was not thrown off his balance by them. There is an instructive story about Giles in the Actus (not in the Fioretti): it occurs in the "Long Life" (chap. xxii), but belongs, I should guess, to the cycle of tales concerning Brother Jacobus de Massa. Brother Jacobus was also a visionary; it was he who saw in vision St. Francis cutting the claws of Brother Bonaventura with a flint knife, so that he could do no more harm to John of Parma. In the passage I have in mind (Actus 47) Jacobus de Massa asks Brother Giles what advice he had to give in the matter of ecstasy (gratiam raptus), and Giles said Nec addas nec minuas, et fuge multitudinem quantum potes. This means, I think, "Wait upon your moods

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but do not force them, and be much alone." Whether the story be historically authentic or not, it does very well sum up Brother Giles's practice.

Giles's own accounts of his greatest ecstasy are given in §§ 13-15 of the "Short Life." He was always most unwilling to say anything about the matter, but the Brethren used to draw him on, and now and then he said more than he thought quite right. The vision was at Cetona, not far from Chiusi. The time was the Christmas of 1226, from three days before Christmas to the eve of the following Epiphany, intermittently, sometimes by day, sometimes at night. What Giles was convinced of was that the Lord Jesus Christ had personally visited him then, and had inspired him with the Holy Spirit even as the Apostles had been inspired on the day of Pentecost. He claimed no honour or authority for himself on account of the experience, but he felt absolutely certain of the fact, and in contrast with St. Paul, who speaks as one uncertain whether his experience in the Third Heaven had been in the body or out of it, he, Giles, said, "But if the Lord had made anyone certain of such a thing—what then? "(§ 15).

It was Christ Himself who had appeared: how holy must the place be! Monte Pessolo behind Cetona must be as holy as La Verna, more holy than St. Nicholas of Bari, as holy as the Domine, quo uadis on the Appian Way, where our Lord appeared to St. Peter. Brother Andrew had said to Giles, "The Lord wrought great things at La Verna on Blessed Francis''-yes, indeed, what Franciscan doubted the tale of the Stigmata or the sanctity of the spot? But Giles answered, "I know of no mountain on this side of the sea so great as Mons Pesulus." Brother Andrew said, "Does it not seem a great thing to thee that an angel should appear to any man?" -for the "crucified seraph" that Francis had seen was regarded as an angel. This successfully drew Brother Giles. "I am astonished at thee, Brother Andrew," he said, "for if there were neither heaven nor earth, nor angels, nor archangels, nor any created thing at all, the greatness of God would not be less; wherefore it is a great thing indeed when the Lord appears." Andrew suggested that a church ought to be built on the place

Giles felt to be so holy, and he asked Giles how it should be dedicated, and Giles said, "To the Feast of Pentecost." Andrew then asked him direct whether he believed that the Holy Spirit had ever come on anyone as it came on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and Giles answered in the words of the Gospel, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing," and added, "Don't let us talk any more about this!" (§ 15).

At another somewhat similar conversation he broke it off with "I've gone far in saying so much" (§ 14).

Whether it was illusion or objective vision, clear intuition or nervous disease, the experience left Brother Giles humble and sane, grateful and watchful over himself. He felt it his duty to be as much alone as possible and as quiet as possible. I think he felt that excitement threw him off his balance, and —to express it in the language of his age—the man who is not watchful and master of himself is as likely to be the prey of demons as the recipient of heavenly consolation. Nec addas nec minuas et fuge multitudinem quantum potes. This is the tale told in Sabatier's "pale and insignificant pages."

I want to conclude by juxtaposing the story of Brother Giles with that of two personages, one modern, the other ancient. The name of the Rev. John Smith, sometime a Master at Harrow, has been handed down to posterity in a very charming Memoir by Edward and Gerald Rendall.² Possibly those who did not know the man may find the biography a trifle pietistic. not the fault of the biographers: Mr. John Smith was genuinely pious-pious through and through. I only saw him some half a dozen times, but there was no doubt either as to his piety or his genuineness. He was a very efficient Master, if eccentric in various little ways, and was respected by us boys, though we all thought him odd. It was not much that I saw of him, for I was a scholar on the Modern Side and John Smith-no one ever called him "Smith"—always took the lowest Form on the Classical Side. He liked dealing with little boys and knew very well how to deal with them. But in common with all the others

¹ John viii. 54.

² Recollections and Impressions of the Rev. John Smith, M.A., by Edward D. Rendall and Gerald H. Rendall (London, 1913).

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I had one or two talks with him, for he arranged to see and get to know all the Harrow boys one by one personally, and I, like the rest, was impressed with his goodness and his interest in each of us.

He retired, ill, in 1880, and I had no more than an impression of real sincerity and goodness, impressive even to a schoolboy, and in addition there was a hint of some sort of queer tragedy. It was not till the Rendalls' biography appeared that I knew the reason, though it was really no secret: John Smith's father had died insane, two sisters had gone mad, and he had known, ever since he was twenty, that he was destined, almost inevitably, to the same fate. By living very quietly and regularly, in a ceaseless round of scholastic and benevolent work, by a steady avoidance of general society and all excitement—his one sensuous indulgence was Sunday afternoon service at Westminster Abbey—he kept off the evil day, but in the end he retired voluntarily to St. Luke's Hospital for the Insane, where he died after some years spent there.

I cannot but feel there is a close psychological likeness between Mr. John Smith and Brother Giles. Upon both, in the phrase of the thirteenth century, facta est manus Domini. They were both very nearly off their balance—but not quite. In both, their abnormal state, whatever be the proper medicomaterialistic description of it, did not hinder but actually helped in the development of a most beautiful character, useful and inspiring to all around them. If John Smith had lived in Italy in the thirteenth century he would certainly have become a Brother Minor, and I am sure he would have had visions akin to those seen by Brother Giles; and if Giles had been trained by Prince Lee at Birmingham in the days of Westcott and F. Rendall, and had lived in the Victorian Harrow that I remember —well, he would have been, I am equally sure, very much like the Reverend John Smith.

The other personage about whom I wish to say a word is no less than Simon Peter. Of all the problems which confront the modern historical investigator when he attempts to study the traditions about the Resurrection of our Lord, the most curious is the absence of any sort of description of what happened to

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Peter. "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon "-that is all we get, and even Apocryphal fancy has nothing to add to it. Whatever our "views," or variety of belief or unbelief, it seems clear that Peter was almost immediately, perhaps on the first Easter Sunday itself, convinced that he had seen the Lord Jesus alive. And whether it arose from objective fact or illusion, Peter's conviction was of immense historical importance: it was round Peter that the little band of Believers rallied. The end of the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel that incorporates some at least of Peter's own reminiscences, is lost, but what of that? Why has Luke nothing more to say? There was a pretty tale in the Nazarean Gospel, preserved by Jerome, telling how the Lord appeared to James and made him eat, "for the Son of Man hath risen from them that sleep "-why is it that no Evangelist tells us a tale of that kind about Peter?

Here it seems to me that Brother Giles may help us towards a solution. Giles was convinced that he, too, had seen the Lord Jesus: it was the great experience of his life. But he would not tell. He had heard ἄρρητα ρήματα; words "unspeakable," perhaps "unspoken," which meant everything to him, but he had (as we may say) no translation. The words, the vision, the experiences gave him intense conviction, but he would not describe it. If he was put off his guard and he began to say something about it he checked himself at once. May not something of the same state of mind have been shared by St. Peter? What he saw or experienced gave him conviction and courage, but he, like Giles, would not tell. Perhaps if we, too, were granted a vision of reality, of the inner meaning of things, of life and death, not by scientific investigation but by real vision and revelation, we too might find that our lips were unaccountably sealed. The Seer and the Prophet are not always conjoined in the same person. However this may be, I do put the thought before those who read this Paper, whether the reticence of Brother Giles may not do something to explain the reticence of Peter.

F. C. BURKITT.

BROTHER ELIAS AS THE LEADER OF THE ASSISAN PARTY IN THE ORDER

HISTORY has few great spiritual movements that have occasioned so much controversy as the Franciscan movement during the thirteenth century. Its course and its chief actors are regarded from two opposite points of view. The idealist looks at its origin, its source of inspiration and its first challenge to the world, and considers what the seed might have grown into apart from the historical conditions of its survival, regarding as betrayals all adaptations to environment. The realist or pragmatist contemplates its mighty Tree in the landscape of human history and traces back its glorious life and providential preservation. The one exalts the miracle of St. Francis in his generation; the other, the no less glorious marvel of the Franciscan Order in our own. For surely throughout all the centuries, to-day as at any moment during the last seven hundred years, the Franciscan Tree with its myriad blossom of holiness, its fruits of good works and its healthful perfume of spiritual and moral sanity, is the most glorious of all the trees that adorn the historical landscape of the Church.

This pragmatic point of view takes into primary consideration the worldly problems that confronted the Order in its greatest crises, and asks what were the changes and adaptations that made possible its survival in its actual form? The greatest crisis surely came immediately after the Founder's death. Indeed, we have often wondered if the Franciscan story should not be told as though beginning at the moment of St. Francis's passing. For on the night that the Founder was no more the long series of writings about his life begins with the eloquent encyclical

of Brother Elias, Vicar-General, announcing to the Order the death and the great miracle of the stigmata. Manifest in this wonderful letter is the writer's passionate devotion and the deep perplexity that besets him as to the future. Well might he say in his fervid rhetoric—"A bitter loss all, but to me a particular danger whom he has left in the midst of the darkness, surrounded by many cares and oppressed by innumerable scourges."

For while the saint was alive, so bright was his figure and so inerrant was his instinct that his followers naturally turned to him in doubt. The life of the whole Order revolved around him, and where he stayed or journeyed was its capital. But as soon as he was dead, its whole plan had to be thought out afresh and a new spiritual and geographical centre of corporate life created. Was this head or heart to be in Rome under the Chair of Peter? Was the stream of Franciscanism to be submerged and lost in the greater stream of the Catholic Church? Surely this would have happened had the body of St. Francis been laid to rest in the Eternal City, or had it been dispersed, as well might have happened, in a thousand jewelled reliquaries all over the Christian world. It is difficult for us to-day to realise the intensity of the mediæval cult of the physical remains of a great saint and the passion with which great cities fought, and the crimes and treacheries that often were perpetrated to obtain them. For where the relics were enshrined, there would the prayers be most effective, there would the greatest miracles take place, and thither would flock the pilgrims from all parts of Christendom. Thus the preservation of this stigmatised and miracle-working body, intact, in the Founder's birthplace was the first great centralising factor making for survival and for that relative independence of the Order which enabled it to play so unique a part in the social and political history of the succeeding centuries. It was the great achievement of Elias and of the immediate followers and companions that being patriotic Assisans they kept the spiritual centre of Franciscanism in their native city, and in doing this they did far more than retard the dissolution of their own circle of influence, which depended on the prestige of their personal association.

For thus they gave time for the growth of an exquisite cycle of art and poetry to develop in and around Assisi, an aureola which thenceforward enshrined the spiritual message as in a sheath of imperishable beauty within which the outer world still finds to-day its inspiration fresh and fragrant. It was from the hermitages of central Italy that emerged the exquisite legends of the Fioretti, and it was from central Italy that came almost all the sweetest of the lesser Franciscan saints and singers. Moreover, it was to Assisi that the greatest artists flocked from Rome, Florence, and Siena, to leave their vivid records of the chief episodes of the Franciscan story. Very different would have been the fame of Francis if Assisi had not been throughout all generations the goal of literary and artistic, as well as of religious, pilgrimages. It would be difficult to deny the part that the beauty of the Umbrian landscape played in the life of the Saint; it would be quite impossible to discount its influence upon his fame to-day. And all this wealth of art and poetry, lavished upon Umbria during the next two or three hundred years, derives from the fact that the sacred body was neither torn in pieces nor lodged in Rome nor any other great and powerful city. That this was no light achievement a brief consideration of the work will show.

St. Francis's death at the Portiuncula had raised in an acutest form the problem that his whole life had been designed to avoid. At the outset of his career he had protested to Bishop Guido that he would not that his Order should possess any property whatever, "for if we have possessions we shall need weapons to defend them." But his death had presented his followers with a possession for which all the world would have fought, and which had to be defended by all the arms that his companions and his native city could command.

During the night of the 3rd to the 4th of October, 1226, the little chapel and the small surrounding buildings were positively besieged by friars and Assisan citizens determined to see the treasure safely housed within their native city. There was no time to be lost; at any moment the Perugians might swoop down or the Roman party intervene on the plea of avoiding an unseemly struggle. That very night a great procession

was formed to carry the precious body and lay it in the little church of San Giorgio, close under the inner circuit of the Assisan wall, where, on the one hand, it could be protected by the friars from the cupidity of the canons of the cathedral and at the same time be kept, as it were, under the shield of the watchful city. Barely for one short hour was a pause made in the hurried journey in order that the sacred wounds might be kissed by Sister Clare—and even then, as we know, there was danger of mutilation, incredible as such sacrilege may seem to us. But the chapel of St. Giorgio could be only a temporary solution, and nothing shows the consummate generalship of Elias and the discipline and unity of the whole body of the First Companions better than the decision and energy with which the further plan was carried out.

At the lower end of the long western spur of Mount Subasio, on which the old Umbrian city of Assisi stands, was an isolated rock surrounded on three sides by sharply falling precipices and only joined to the city by a narrow neck of land almost cut through by a ravine, which at the present day is filled up and built over by the upper and lower Piazzas of San Francesco. This little knoll was known as the Collis Infernus to distinguish it from the Collis Supernus on which had stood the castle of the German Seneschal, destroyed in 1198. We know practically nothing of the early history of this lower hill, but there was a legend that it was a place of execution. It may have been called the "Hill of Hell," or this may be no more than a subsequent play upon its former name. In any case, a legend was now put about that Francis in his humility had wished to be buried in the place of malefactors, and the thought of Christ buried on the slopes of Golgotha doubtless persuaded the friars.

But surely with Elias the strategic considerations were of more practical importance. The more gradual escarpment of the hill towards the west was to be strengthened and faced by an artificial cliff of masonry which is still the most conspicuous object in the Umbrian landscape. Above and to the east about a furlong away were the walls of the old Roman city of Assisi, shaped like a great crescent with the church of San Giacomo di Muro Rupto at one point and Santa Maria Maggiore and the

episcopal palace at the other. Between was the ravine of which we have already spoken, to be crossed only by a narrow causeway or bridge. The unerring eye of the future military engineer of Frederick II, who was to build for him a chain of castles along the shores of Sicily to enable him to set out as from a safe base on his crusade, made no mistakes as to the site of this great ecclesiastical fortress, which within a few years was held by the Pope to be the safest keep in Italy. For there the Papal treasure reposed for at least 150 years.

The convent-keep was strong enough to resist a raid from any outside enemy until the city of Assisi could relieve it in case of a prolonged siege. At the same time it was sufficiently removed from the city itself not to be easily plundered by sacrilegious citizens. It was subjected to both these tests in the course of the next centuries. Three times the Perugians, while besieging Assisi, attempted to tear up the flagstones of the church in order to seize the precious body, but each time were interrupted by the protests of Christendom. Once the great Assisan family of the Fiumi sacked the papal treasures. But it is obvious that had the relic been placed within the city the jewels would never have been safe from the plunder of some civic tyrant, given the anarchical opportunity of those times; whereas, had it been placed in relative isolation it would have been subject to constant raids on the part of some powerful neighbouring city, jealous of the fame and wealth that constant pilgrimages brought and still bring to Assisi with hardly diminished frequency.

One cannot believe that Elias was not working in close co-operation with the protector of the Order, Cardinal Ugolino, shortly to be chosen Pope as Gregory IX; with St. Clare, who was to invite the new Pope to Assisi in the following spring, and with all the Assisan brothers without exception. It is quite inconceivable that there should have been any division in the Assisan party at this moment, when all depended on their unity and energy. Long before the canonisation, preparations were being made upon the Hill of Hell for a tomb and shrine that should be impregnable. Already in answer to the letter of Elias treasures and money were pouring in from all parts of the world. In March, 1227, one Simon Puzzarelli, gave to the

Pope a piece of land needed for his building, and soon hundreds of voluntary workers were offering their services to prepare the site. If we can believe tradition, Brother Elias was not only writing to all parts of the world for contributions, but was personally drawing up the plans for the great building. The rocky crag had to be levelled and the vast substructure built before the canonisation, when the Pope was to lay the foundation-stone of that double church which is still one of the architectural wonders of Italy.

Most opportunely in March, 1227, the centenarian Honorius III was gathered to his fathers and Cardinal Ugolino was elected in his stead. Moreover, hardly had he been consecrated than the turbulence of his Roman subjects drove him from his capital, and, proceeding slowly northwards on his way to Perugia, he passed the early summer in Assisi, staying at the episcopal palace, but spending his days chiefly with St. Clare in the little convent of San Damiano. Brother Elias, being the great friend of both of them, must have been frequently present at the conferences, while his plans were discussed again and again among all the Assisan party in the Order. At this moment Gregory decided to build in Assisi his great palace also, "the Gregorian palace," as Salimbene calls it, with the double church for chapel, the lower to be the shrine for the body and a conventual church for the friars, who would act as a bodyguard, the upper to serve for ceremonies and his own particular use.

So the canonisation was hurried on and took place at San Giorgio in July, 1228. Thomas of Celano had already in the previous year been commissioned by the Pope to write the biography of the Saint for the edification of the Order, and more especially for the purpose of raising money—an object furthered also by a special indulgence. On the day following the canonisation Gregory laid the foundation-stone of his new house and Francis's, the site, as we have said, having been already long prepared.

But the climax of the action of the Assisan party is marked by that mysterious and dramatic episode which broke the solemn tenor of the great ceremony of the burial. What actually

took place is still rather obscure, for a decent veil was thrown over it by subsequent chroniclers. Neither St. Bonaventura nor the Three Companions mention it, and even the chief enemies of Elias refrained from casting the blame for it on him. Either the body was transferred from San Giorgio and buried three days before the official funeral or, as seems more likely, the ceremony was interrupted by an incursion of armed men and friars, who seized the bier, carried it into the church and closed the doors in the face of the legates, cardinals, bishops, envoys and the rest of the enormous crowd of pilgrims from all parts of Europe. For three days the people raged, and only after the crowd had melted away were the doors opened. Elias and his fellow-conspirators declared that the body was buried under the pavement, where it was only finally discovered six centuries later, after a long and scientific search.

Legends of a third and still more glorious secret church under the lower church were long believed in Umbria. The secret of the entrance to it was recorded in the signet-ring Elias wore, an impression of which is still preserved showing this third shrine clearly. A special functionary was deputed to be its guardian. All of which goes to prove that the Assisans in general, and the brothers in particular, had good reason to believe that an attempt would be made to carry off the body or at any rate to snatch away small relics of it, and that they were determined to resist with all their force and to keep their treasure inviolate and Is it likely that Leo or Bernard or Giles would not have been as anxious for the safety of the body of their friend and leader and as active for its preservation as were the Podestà and priors of the city? That all the first companions were equally attached to the tomb under the Basilica is proved by the fact that they were all buried as near as possible to the body of their beloved—all except Giles who wished to be buried there, but whose body was forcibly detained by the Perugians. Leo in particular died in the great convent and left to it his precious keepsake, the blessing of St. Francis, which next to the body of the Saint is its greatest treasure. Is it conceivable that there should have been a division at this moment between Elias and Leo, and that the latter should have broken a bowl set up for

collecting alms under the Pope's indulgence, and that Elias should have had him scourged and expelled from Assisi? If such a scandal did ever occur, how was it that it escaped the record of Eccleston or Salimbene who both so diligently collected tales against Elias? The aim of such an act could only have been to make a public protest, yet the story is not told till over a hundred years later, and then only in a partisan and most untrustworthy book, the Speculum Vitae Beati Francisci et Sociorum Eius, composed at the earliest about 1350. As a matter of history there is no writing of any kind whatever, in which Elias or his party are criticised for the building of the church and convent, of earlier date than the middle of the fourteenth century, when the controversy regarding Poverty was at its height and Elias had become the scapegoat to receive the blame for all the evils with which the Order was afflicted. With Elias undoubtedly worked Bernard, Masseo, Illuminato his secretary, Ruffino and Angelo as well as Leo, the three last being the reputed authors of the Legend of the Three Companions, in the final chapter of which high praise and gratitude are expressed to the Pope for building the magnificent church and so greatly enriching it. We cannot see any reason whatever, apart from prejudice, why the authority of this little book or its last chapters should be rejected as a true indication of the feeling of the Assisan party in the Order towards the middle of the thirteenth century. In short, the desire to prove the division at this critical moment between Elias and the rest of the first companions involves denial of the best authorities, acceptance of late and baseless calumnies, and distortion of all historical probability.

But if we abolish, as I think we may, this legend of reproach regarding a quarrel between Elias and the First Companions, how are we to account for the great movement in the Order that finally brought about the fall of the great Minister in a Chapter-General held at the Lateran in the presence of his friend, Pope Gregory IX, in April, 1239? We hold that the origin of this movement is to be sought in the general movement of the spirit of the times.

In the Legend of the Three Companions (which, with the first

life by Thomas of Celano, may be classed as the literature of the first period, that is to say, of the predominance of the Assisan party), we have in the last chapter a passage, which, though not yet hinting at a rift, is not without significance. After praising the Pope for so honouring the Saint by building the great church and enriching it with gifts and precious ornaments, and after speaking of the many nobles and people who had taken the habit converted by the miracles at the translation of the sacred body, there is a final paragraph which runs as follows:—

"Similarly also many wise and most highly lettered men, both secular and beneficed clerics, despising the lusts of the flesh and putting aside from themselves the impiety and secular desires of this world, entered into the aforesaid Order of the Friars Minor, conforming themselves to Poverty and following in the footprints of Christ and of His servant, the most holy Francis, in all things, according to the measure of divine grace. Whence of this Saint it may be said not unduly that which was written of Samson, which is that he slew far more in his death than before he had slain when alive." In short, these great public acts of recognition, the Canonisation and the Burial, were, as we should say to-day, very good publicity and drew into the Order a great band of foreign scholars, forming henceforth a conspicuous element, and a second group which in the course of the next few years was utterly to submerge and overwhelm by its intellectual prestige the relatively rude and simple group of the earlier brothers, headed by the First Companions under the leadership of Elias of Beviglie.

For this Assisan group must have seemed very simple and provincial to the cosmopolitan doctors of Paris and Oxford. The First Companions were bound together not only by the supreme love for St. Francis and their common sufferings and sacrifices, but also by ties of common upbringing, common dialect, common prejudices and the interests of the small world in which they had always thought and moved and had their being. Even the pedantries of the ultramontanes as to the observance of the Rule, of which they have seen the making, must have thrown the Umbrians together; for the Rule for them

had been the Saint himself. To the foreign scholar the death of the Founder must have been a solemn and sorrowful occurrence, compensated by the great honour of the canonisation; to the Companions it meant not only an overwhelming personal loss, but the burden of a tremendous responsibility whereby they became the living vehicles of the real tradition against not only innumerable sceptics, but also the misunderstanding zeal of the new foreign devotees. Now Elias, both by birth and natural inclination, must have inclined to this group, being a patriotic provincial Assisan, a man of large practical interest, great architect and engineer, organiser and disciplinarian, but the very antithesis of the cosmopolitan university scholar. practical ruler he was opposed to the futile delays of democracy; for him government was an art which the consultation of hundreds of less competent people in expensive General Chapters only hindered. In his leisure moments, when neither building churches nor designing castles, nor directing propaganda for collecting money, nor imposing his rule on dissident friars in distant hermitages, or providing for the practical needs of the many convents of the poor ladies or organising missions to the Moslems or diplomatic embassies, he characteristically turned as to a hobby to the experiments of alchemy—just as his scholarly successors, such as Haymo of Faversham, John of Parma, or St. Bonaventura, turned to the writing of books. That Elias was the only possible General-Minister in the Assisan party is as obvious as the fact that it was not to be expected that great foreign scholars would consent to be ruled indefinitely by him.

As might have been anticipated, it was in the English province that the standard of rebellion was first raised, for Englishmen just at this period were raging together at the export of good English money to Italy—the exactions of Peter's pence—and of the foreign prelates that Henry III was constantly foisting into English benefices. Secondly, every one in England—and the friars were among the leaders—was discussing what we should call to-day the first principles of constitutional government—disputes that in the course of a few years were to break out in the Barons' War. The king was attempting to impose

his will autocratically, if necessary appealing to the mob of his loyal subjects to support him; while the Barons and tenants-in-chief and great officials were insisting that they and they alone should be duly summoned to regular sittings of the Common Council—Commune Concilium Regni, as it was called—and that the consent of this body should be a condition precedent to legislation and taxation.

Now St. Francis had never formally consulted his ministers before making his Second Rule; indeed, if the Speculum may be believed upon the point, it was the ministers and Elias, in particular, who came to him to say that if he made it too hard they would not obey it. Moreover, St. Francis had nominated first Peter of Cattaneo and after his death Elias as his Vicar, without holding any regular election. He just presented his nominee to the crowd of laymen and clerics assembled together, but not summoned individually, in a General Chapter and placed the whole Order under obedience to him, much as the ordinary mediæval Italian autocrat presented his decrees or his vicegerents to the popular assemblies in the market-place. Thomas of Eccleston's scandalised account of the later or second election of Elias, when the lay-brothers carried him by force and placed him in the chair of office, while he protested his ill-health and unwillingness to rule, sounds very like such an "Election." Later on we hear that Pope Gregory said that he had chosen Elias because he thought the Brethren desired him.

So we have Thomas of Eccleston writing in support of the English point of view, and the English scholars—Haymo of Faversham, Adam Marsh, Alexander of Hales, Nicholas Rufus and the rest, backed by such English prelates as Robert Grossetête, Bishop of Lincoln, Cardinal Robert of Summercote and Arnulf the papal penitentiary—setting forth precisely these grievances—that Elias ruled despotically and even cruelly when opposed, that he sent visitors round to foreign provinces instead of summoning General Chapters, and that he demanded English money for building churches and convents in Italy without consulting the provincial ministers as to its expenditure. A clash, then, upon this constitutional question was bound to

come, in view of the growing power of the foreign element in this international Order. Moreover, it was accentuated by another and similar question that excited Italian as well as English hostility and which is voiced in particular by Brother Salimbene.

Now Brother Salimbene, or-as he was called in the world -Ognibene degli Adami-was received into the Order at the age of sixteen in the year 1238 by Brother Elias himself. The reason of his bitter hostility to the Minister-General is all the more difficult to explain, as the latter fell from power less than a twelvemonth afterwards. Trained in the school that Elias had founded, Salimbene became a typical intellectual free-lance, dabbling in the rich literature of mystical prophecy, in Joachism in particular, wandering from one city and one province to another and pluming himself not a little on acquaintance with the great—and especially with famous doctors. Having renounced the Ghibellinism of his family, he probably hated Elias on account of the latter's apostasy after his fall in joining the imperial court. At any rate, he can scarcely name him without strong terms of abuse, such as "this worst of friars," "this man of Belial," and he draws up a list of thirteen charges, which unexpectedly give his whole case away. For they all amount to this: that Elias favoured laymen, that he brought into the Order many "useless persons" such as twentyfive laymen in Siena, thirty in Parma, and so forth. Next, that he promoted laymen and unlettered men to be guardians and even ministers, that he allowed laymen to take precedence of priests, that he did not make general regulations for them, but let them wander about and frequent the schools, and encouraged them to come to Chapters; that he permitted them to wear beards and cords not of regular type; that under his rule they were even heard to reproach the students for talking together in Latin, and that in some convents priests were even expected to work in the kitchen and laundry! Further, that Elias did not visit the convents himself, but sent visitors, even laymen, to report upon them; that he persecuted the ministers, depriving them of books, deposing them and suspending them and sending them on distant missions. These, with a general

charge of living luxuriously, of eating apart and keeping a cook of his own, are the gist of the accusation that Salimbene brings against Elias.

But it was the Englishmen backed by other foreigners that insisted upon the Chapter which was held in Rome in the presence of Pope Gregory in April, 1239. Given the friendliness of the Pope, it would not have been difficult for Elias to rebut all their charges, and in Eccleston's account of the Chapter there is no suggestion that the foreign friars brought up against him any of the real grievances which he explains in his book and which had caused them to travel all the way from England. For, after all, these were not charges which an Italian mediæval Pontiff would have understood, accustomed as he was to autocratic rule and presumably approving of autocracy. With regard to the preferring of laymen, was not this also in the true Franciscan tradition? Was not St. Francis himself a layman and almost all his First Companions, including Elias? Had not Agnellus of Pisa been sent to England as the first provincial minister when only a deacon, although he had priests upon his staff? We are told that Haymo accused Elias of amassing money; obviously here, too, he was treading on delicate ground, seeing that it was with the Pope's assistance that he had collected such large sums to build the church that should worthily enshrine the Founder's body and should serve as part of a papal residence. As we have already said, no contemporary writer ever criticised Elias for building a great church in honour of St. Francis. Moreover, the friars could not say in the Pope's presence that they objected to his taking money out of England. So they accused him of keeping a palfrey for himself, and he naturally retorted that he had always insisted that if he was to rule them he must have certain comforts because of his delicate health. But surely old Haymo and the others had not come all the way from England to point out the personal faults in the Minister-General's observance of the Rule, which must have been far better known to the Italians. If, therefore, Eccleston's account is true, one cannot help feeling that Elias's position was so strong that he could easily have routed his opponents, had he only kept his temper.

But he gave Haymo the lie direct in the sacred presence of the Pope, and his rude followers provoked a riot which played into the more urbane foreign scholars' hands. The Pope was outraged at the tumult and peremptorily imposed a silence, during which one thing only must have been plain to him, namely, that Elias was becoming intensely unpopular abroad, and that this would ruin the Order. So Gregory used his prerogative in true autocratic fashion and summarily deposed him. He said he had appointed Elias because he thought the friars desired him; if they did so no longer his decree was that Elias be dismissed. Elias, then, was not deposed because of self-indulgence or because he had acted cruelly or "unconstitutionally," or because he had carried on the tradition of St. Francis too long in promoting laymen to responsible posts which required practical sense and worldly wisdom. was getting out of his control, owing to the new type of man and the new spirit that had invaded it. The Pope decided rightly that a change was needed, and that Elias, the leader of the rough simple laymen which formed the Assisan provincial party, the unconstitutional organiser of natural genius, had served his time and done his work. So we pass on to the second period, that of the predominance of the doctors.

Elias's successors carried out precisely the reforms one would expect. Priests alone were to be promoted to office or to be sent as delegates to Chapters; laymen were not to be even admitted to the schools. Priests were to have separate cells, or studies, in which to read and prepare their sermons. Priests were to be exempted from menial tasks, above all from begging, and also from cooking, washing their own clothes and so forth—on all of which Elias had insisted.

As a result of these reforms the Franciscan Order became henceforth predominantly a clerical Order, with priests as an exclusive governing class; and this was the real beginning of the rift which eventually led to rebellions, persecutions, and disruption. These reforms were the cause of many changes in the outward appearance of the friaries. The churches had to be enlarged to provide sufficient altars at which multitudes of priests could say their daily Mass; the convents had to

contain large numbers of separate cells, as well as libraries; the great accession of those who neither worked nor begged necessitated provision—that is, endowments, legacies, properties held in trust, and all the rest of that legal paraphernalia that so outraged the consciences of the simpler and unlettered brethren, ousted as they were from their lot and part and jealous for the older reading of the Rule. During the next five years the immediate successors of Elias sought and obtained from Rome at least five times as many privileges as Elias had asked for in the whole of his reign. But perhaps with most of the simpler friars it was not so much the legal questions of privileges, poverty or property, as the stifling atmosphere of the great ecclesiastical convent, with its rules and regulations, its orderly procedures, its hierarchy of officials whom they could not venture to accost; its fine scholars whom they could not understand and the constant need of obtaining permissions and dispensations, when they had only sought "to follow in the footprints of Christ and of his servant Francis."

It was only a few years after Elias's fall, when Haymo of Faversham was Minister-General—that is, between 1242 and 1244—that word was sent out to all the provinces that the Brethren should elect men to express any doubt they might have concerning the Rule. The English friars elected Adam Marsh, Peter the custodian of Oxford, and Henry of Burford, all well-known writers and scholars. On the night of the election St. Francis appeared in a dream to Brother John Bannister and showed him a deep well. And Friar John said, "Father, the Brothers are attempting to explain the Rule; it were better that thou thyself should explain it to us." But St. Francis answered, "Go, my son, to the lay brothers and they will explain thy rule to thee!" which was indeed characteristic of St. Francis, but entirely out of sympathy with the times.

Henceforth the scene, which had hitherto been mediæval Umbria with its civic strife and its warring cities and the exquisite poetry of its hermitages, shifts to the great theological schools of Paris and Oxford. The problem of the Minister-General is no more how to save the relics from the Perugians for Assisi, but how to interpret the prophecies of Joachim or

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how to read the Everlasting Gospel. Franciscan friars are henceforth to be found in the Episcopacy, the Cardinalate and, before long, even upon the Papal Throne. General Chapters had hitherto been held at Assisi or Rieti; in the next period they are held at Rome, Genoa, Narbonne, Paris, Toulouse and many another great foreign city. The Franciscan literature of this next period is not the legend of Celano or of "the Three Companions," but the Greater Legend of St. Bonaventura with its universal literary appeal. Even the Second Life by Celano contains an episode emphasising St. Francis's reverence for doctors of theology, which curiously enough had been forgotten when the author was writing his earlier biography. If a General-Minister, such as Bonaventure, visits the little hermitages of Umbria, it is rather as an historical scholar making a tour to collect material for a book. "O Paris, thou hast destroyed Assisi," was the wistful comment of Giles. Assisi and its party in the Order had been swamped by a great international invasion.

Against this flood Elias had battled and done much to consolidate his party's influence by preserving the relics in Assisi and by bringing artists, poets and pilgrims to interpret and diffuse abroad the spirit of the Franciscan lands. It is a strange irony that in the next century, when the reaction takes place and Umbria once more asserts its influence by the publication of such books as the Speculum Perfectionis and the Little Flowers, that tradition in the hermitages should have so veered round as to see in Elias the prototype among the First Companions of those hierarchs against which the sons of liberty and poverty were contending. It is true that, with good reason, he built the great fortress-church and the first great convent of the Order, but he was soon outdone by the Paduan Brothers over the tomb of St. Anthony and by the ecclesiastically-minded Brothers in almost every great city of Europe, where far larger churches than the Assisi church were built less than ten years later, including the great church at Oxford built in 1246. It is true that he was the first organiser of the Order, but he organised it, as it were, under St. Francis's eye and in the Franciscan manner—that is, paying more attention to the practical question of obedience than to the constitutional or the hierarchical questions which

perpetuated class divisions between cleric and layman, minister and humble friar, and tended so much to assimilate the Franciscan to the older feudal Orders. It is not irrelevant to note that the fourteenth century return to the old observance was started in the little hermitages by another Umbrian layman, Paolo Trinci.

But this wider adaptation to the international conditions of the period had to come. It was obviously necessary for the survival of the Order in a strictly hierarchical world. The great foreign provinces could not possibly have been governed from Assisi, or by the methods of the Portiuncula, now that the saintly Founder was no more. Above all, we would not wish to be thought to depreciate the great learning of those splendid scholars who are the particular glory of English Franciscanism. It was a great gain to the world that such men were given the chance to study afforded by the new Franciscan schools. They not only contributed to the science of the world, but also to the glory and survival of the Order. But Paris, Oxford, Padua and Bologna were their true habitations; it was there that lay the great work they were doing for mankind. Yet it is a great gain also that the little city of Assisi remains the spiritual capital of the Order, and that there are to be found not only the historic setting of the old ingenuous legends, little changed by centuries, and the beauty of the exquisite landscape that consoled the First Companions; but still more precious the great treasure of inspired artistic interpretation and the saintly atmosphere of countless millions, who through all centuries have flocked in pious pilgrimage to offer prayer and worship at the tomb of the great Saint. This is the supreme work of Brother Elias, as leader of the Assisan party in the Franciscan Order.

HAROLD E. GOAD



VI

CHRONICLES OF THE MENDICANT FRIARS 1

Under this title may be included both histories of the Mendicant Orders and general chronicles written by friars. I intend to speak of both of these kinds, but to confine my attention solely to the Dominicans and Franciscans in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Biographies—the various Lives of St. Dominic and St. Francis, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Thomas Aquinas and other saints of the Orders—will be excluded from this survey.

Now, if we consider first the works relating expressly to the history of either of the two Orders, one contrast at once strikes us. Such histories are fairly numerous among the Franciscans, rare among the Dominicans. The Dominican Vitae Fratrum,² written about 1256-1260, though containing invaluable illustrations of the lives and mentality of the early Dominicans, is in no sense a chronicle but simply a work of edification: as its name implies it was a modern version of the Vitae Patrum of the fathers of the African Desert. In the thirteenth century the Dominicans have (besides the Vitae Fratrum) the short chronicle of Gerard of Fracheto,³ but they have nothing to compare with the chronicles of Thomas of Eccleston, Jordan of Giano, Salimbene: and in the early fourteenth century there are only certain works of Bernard Gui to set against the Chronica Tribulationum and the great compilations of Arnold

¹ This paper is based on a lecture given first at King's College, London, 15 November, 1921.

² Fratris Gerardi de Fracheto O.P. Vitae Fratrum Ordinis Praedicatorum, necnon Chronica ordinis 1203-1254, ed. B. M. Reichert, O.P., in Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica, I (1897).

³ See note 1.

of Sarano and Bartholomew of Pisa. The interest of the Franciscans in the history of their Order was more widespread and more continuous than the interest of the Dominicans in the history of theirs.

What is the explanation of this remarkable contrast? does not seem to be that Dominican chronicles have been lost: the Friars Preachers have preserved their records much better than the Friars Minor. The explanation is perhaps twofold. Firstly, the Franciscans were inspired by the conviction that their movement was something new in the world-amounting almost to another divine revelation (this feeling is expressed in the elaborate comparison of St. Francis with Christ in Bartholomew of Pisa's Liber de Conformitate); while the Dominicans, following the Rule of St. Augustine and claiming for certain purposes to be Regular Canons, could feel or assert no such originality. Secondly, the bitter quarrels and conflicting ideals which prevailed from very early times in the Franciscan Order forced each party to appeal to history for support. The Chronica Tribulationum of Angelo of Clarenoa history of the persecutions of the Spiritual Friars by the conventuals—gives an example of this tendency to partisan or propagandist history.

The earliest Franciscan chronicles of which we have record are histories of provinces—not of particular houses, nor of the Order. The house—or "place"—to a friar had none of the peculiar importance which the monastery had to the monk. The friar moved from one house to another—and his life's work was not inside the walls of a monastery.

The first of these provincial histories is that "On the coming and spread of the Friars Minor in England," by Fr. Thomas, generally called Thomas of Eccleston. Brother Thomas

¹ Tractatus Fr. Thomae vulgo dicti de Eccleston, De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam, ed. A. G. Little (Collection d'etudes et de documents sur l'histoire religieuse et littéraire du Moyen Âge, tome vii, Paris 1909). Also edited by Brewer in Monumenta Franciscana, I (Rolls Series), 1858, pp. 5-72, and in Analecta Franciscana, I (Quaracchi), 1885, pp. 215-275. Translated by Miss Gurney Salter, Litt.D., The Coming of the Friars Minor to England and Germany, being the Chronicles of Brother Thomas of Eccleston and Brother Jordan of Giano (Dent, 1926).

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dedicates his work to Simon of Ashby, who was guardian or custodian somewhere in England: he hopes that it will give Simon materials for encouraging his beloved sons, and that it will give the friars inspiring examples drawn from the history of their own Order: it had been his joy to gather materials for his work from his fellow friars for twenty-six years. It appears from incidental notices in the chronicle that Thomas entered the Order after 1229, but that he was already at that time in touch with the Friars: the latest events referred to took place in 1258: the twenty-six years would therefore run from 1232 to 1258. The author began collecting materials within eight years of the coming of the Franciscans to England.

A few more details of his life emerge from the chronicle. He lived for some time between 1240 and 1254 in the London house and partook of the hard fare of the brethren: he notes that "the beer was sometimes so sour that some even preferred to drink water," and that when bread was scarce he had for long eaten substitutes. He studied at Oxford, but he only mentions the fact when alluding to a fellow-student who, instead of attending to the lectures employed the lecture-hour in composing little things of his own; "and by a just judgment when this brother became a lecturer he failed to get the attention of his class, and said he often felt more inclined to shut up his book and go away than to lecture." Friar Thomas, though immensely proud of the doings of learned English friars, shows no signs of being a learned man himself. His chronicle is singularly free from learned allusions or references to authorities. Very seldom, and then only when dealing with events outside England, can he be shown to have used any previously existing sources (apart from records). He wrote down simply things which came under his own observation or which he heard from his friends. The only evidence of an effort after style is his frequent use of the rhythms used in the Roman Curia: it suggests that he had some notarial training and was employed in drawing up official documents. It does not appear that he ever held any office in the province.

Most of the statements of Fr. Thomas rest on his authority alone. Many, however, can be checked by contemporary

records. Thus he says that Fr. Richard of Devon spent the last years of his life at Romney. Romney is not mentioned in any list of Franciscan friaries; but entries in the Liberate Rolls and Gascon Rolls prove that there was a friary there in 1241-1242. His account of the peculiar relation between the monks and friars of Reading is supported by entries in the Charter Rolls and the Register of the Abbey of Reading. The story of the restoration of land to the friars at Gloucester by Sir Thomas Berkeley after it had been surrendered by them is confirmed by an original deed still preserved in the archives of the city. The date (1254) which he implies for the General Chapter of Metz has long been disputed, but has recently been proved correct by the discovery of an original record of the Chapter.

Fr. Thomas is honest, well-informed, accurate; and he possesses a certain historical sense. Compare his chronicle with the Dominican Vitae Fratrum: they are almost exactly contemporaneous. Both were intended for edification: both were meant to furnish members of the Order with a record of the sayings and doings of their predecessors, which might serve as examples: both emphasise the purity and poverty of primitive times and contrast them with present relaxations. But the Dominican book exalts the moral and spiritual element at the expense of the historical: in the English chronicle the historical element remains paramount. We can extract from Brother Thomas a comparatively clear idea of the expansion and organisation of the English province: by no amount of analysing could we obtain a clear idea of the expansion and organisation of the Dominican Order from the Vitae Fratrum.

The second provincial history is the chronicle of Jordan of Giano 1 on the Franciscans of Germany. This was not the outcome of twenty-six years of note-taking, but an old man's reminiscences of his youth, dictated to and taken down by a younger friend. Jordan explains the origin of the work in his prologue. "Sometimes I have talked about the coming of the first friars to Germany and their lives and deeds, and many

¹ Chronica Fratris Jordani, ed. H. Boehmer (Collection d'études et de documents, tome vi, Paris, 1908). Translated by Miss Salter (see p. 86, note).

brethren who listened were edified—so I have been asked by many many times to write down what I said, and anything else I could remember, and note the dates at which the friars were sent and when the various events happened. And because it is like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey, I resolved to gratify the devout wish of the brethren, mainly at the urgent request of Brother Baldwin of Brandenburg, who of his own free will and also at the command of Brother Bartholomew, then minister of Saxony, offered himself to do the writing. In the year 1262 therefore, after the Chapter held at Halberstadt on the third Sunday after Easter (30 April), we are staying on in the Chapter place, I dictating and Brother Baldwin writing."

Jordan was then nearly 70 years old. He dictated a chronicle in the form of annals from 1209 to 1262: but the first ten years are dismissed in a few lines, the last twenty-three in three pages. Nearly the whole of the chronicle (or memoirs) is concerned with the twenty years from 1219 to 1239. These were the years when Jordan was taking a leading part in stirring events—the years which remained vividly in the old man's memory. His memory is remarkably vivid and remarkably accurate. Thus in describing the journey of the friars over the Brenner by Bozen, Brixen, Sterzing, Matrei, he only goes wrong in the name of one village. His chronicle is distinguished by the number of dates given, in this forming a striking contrast to Eccleston who gives directly only one date in the whole of his chronicle.

Jordan was described as a "gay-hearted little man": he

Jordan was described as a "gay-hearted little man": he preserved to the end of his life the freshness of the early Franciscan spring. His Latin is very simple (except for a veritable passion for the use of ablatives absolute) and easy to read, and the chronicle deserves to be better known in England. One quotation (slightly abbreviated) will show its quality.

He is describing the Chapter held at the Portiuncula in 1221—two years after the first abortive attempt to send missions beyond the Alps:—

"Just as the Chapter was coming to an end it suddenly occurred to St. Francis that Germany was still without friars. And because St. Francis was weak, anything that he wanted to say to the Chapter was announced by Brother Elias, St. Francis

sitting at the feet of Brother Elias and pulling his habit to draw his attention. Having his attention thus called, Brother Elias bent down to him and hearing what he wanted, stood up and said: 'Brethren, thus says the Brother (St. Francis was called "the Brother" par excellence): There is a country called Germany, in which there are devout Christians: you have often seen them tramping through our country to visit the shrines of the Saints, with long sticks and big boots, sweating in the heat, and singing God's praises as they go. As the friars who have been sent there have come back badly treated, the Brother will not compel any one to go, but he calls for volunteers. Any wishing to go should stand up and collect together on that side.' Fired by desire of martyrdom about ninety rose and went to the spot indicated.

"Now there was at the Chapter a friar who used to pray God to protect him from the heresies of the Lombards and the ferocity of the Germans. This friar, seeing all these brethren going, as he thought, to certain martyrdom, and remembering how sorry he was not to have known those who had been martyred in Spain, determined not to miss another chance, so he went to them, running from one to another and asking, 'Who are you? Where do you come from?' thinking he would gain great prestige if he could say—when they were martyred— 'I knew him—he was a friend of mine.' But one of the friars who enjoyed a joke caught hold of him and said: 'My name is Palmerio-and you are one of us and are coming with us.' He abhorring the very name of Germans, replied: 'I am not one of you, and only wanted to know you, I don't want to go with you.' But he was forced to sit down among them and his name was inserted in the list of volunteers. . . . This inquisitive friar was Jordan of Giano, who is now writing this to you, and that is how he came to Germany."

Most of the chronicle is less personal than this. Jordan generally only refers to himself incidentally—in connection with the events he records. Unlike Eccleston he held important offices in the Order: he was guardian, custodian, vicar-provincial, and was employed on the delicate business of appealing to Gregory IX against Brother Elias. One wishes that his

secretary had jogged his memory occasionally: for instance, he makes only one allusion to St. Elizabeth of Hungary whom he must have known well, and no reference at all to his work in Bohemia and Poland and his relations to the invading Tartars. We know of these only through some letters of his which got to St. Albans and are preserved in the Additamenta of Matthew of Paris.¹

Another Franciscan chronicle which consists largely of personal reminiscences is the famous chronicle of Salimbene.2 Fate has dealt hardly with Salimbene: he was a prolific writer but only one of his works remains, and that in a single MS. The MS. of the chronicle now in the Vatican was actually written by Salimbene's own hand, but it is in a sadly mutilated condition: the first 200 leaves are lost: the end is missing: and in the body of the work leaves have been deliberately cut out apparently by some censor who objected to the contents. The fragment which we possess (some 280 leaves of manuscript) begins c. 1170 and ends in 1288: Salimbene uses other chronicles, especially those of Sicard of Cremona and his own contemporary, Albert Milioli of Reggio, to supply a kind of framework, but the picture in the frame is painted by his own hand. His personality permeates the whole work. He is a prince of egotists and loves to tell his own experiences. He has the power of making his characters live. In a few vivid strokes he brings before us the intense and turbulent life of the mediæval Italian cities.

Salimbene was born at Parma in 1221; he wrote his chronicle between 1282 and 1288. He had travelled widely in Italy and France and come across many of the leading men of the time: Brother Elias, who received him into the Order in 1238; the Emperor Frederick II; Pope Innocent IV, who received him in private audience at Lyons and "absolved him from all his sins"; John de Piano de Carpinis, the traveller in Tartary; King Louis IX; John of Parma, the Minister-General; Hugh

¹ Chronica Majora, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series), vol. vi (1882), Additamenta, pp. 80-84.

² Chronica fr. Salimbene de Adam, ed. O. Holder-Egger, Mon. Germ. Hist. Script. XXXII, 1905-1913. See also G. G. Coulton, From St. Francis to Dante, a translation of all that is of primary interest in the Chronicle of the Franciscan Salimbene (Dent, 1906).

de Digna, who instructed him in the doctrines of Abbot Joachim; Gerard of Burgo San Donnino, whose Introduction to the Eternal Gospel stirred up the great anti-Joachite campaign and produced many heretical movements. Many persons and families mentioned by Dante (especially in the *Inferno*) are met with on the earth, in Salimbene's pages.

One thing which strikes one in reading of Salimbene's doings is the extraordinary amount of freedom which a Franciscan friar enjoyed. In September, 1247, he was sent by his province (of Bologna) to study at Paris. He went by Lyons where the General Council was still sitting, and where our friar, bringing news of the war against the emperor and the siege of Parma, was a welcome visitor and had a great time: he was invited to sit between the Patriarch of Constantinople and a cardinal, and made a speech which in its outspokenness astonished the hearers: "I was a young man then and hadn't yet learnt it is not wise to say all you think." He then wandered leisurely on through France-stopping anywhere where interesting things were happening, and reached Paris on 2 February, 1248. there a week," he says, "and saw many pleasant things." Why his university career was cut so short does not appear. He then continued his wanderings staying at Sens and Auxerre, visiting Cluny and other places. He is enthusiastic on the wines: "Note that the wines of Auxerre are white or golden, and fragrant, and comforting and strong, and they turn all who drink them to cheerfulness and merriment," and then he goes on to quote drinking songs. He then followed the crusading army of Louis IX down the Rhone, and we find him in Provence, Genoa, back again at Lyons in March, 1249, where his provincial minister found him and was not pleased. "Forgive me," said Salimbene, "I did not think you would mind." He was sent back to his province but did not reach it before June.

Salimbene's chronicle is not a history of the Order or a province or any particular country, but a history of his life and times. It is the last of the three Franciscan chronicles whose writers depend primarily on their own knowledge and experience.

Histories of the Order appear later than histories of provinces, and seem to have originated from lists of the Ministers-General.

Several of them with brief annotations were produced at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The earliest is perhaps that by Peregrinus of Bologna.¹ About the same time but independently appeared the "Chronicle of the First XIV or XV Generals," to which were added later a number of continuations.² This work formed the nucleus of the far more extensive "Chronicle of the XXIV Generals." 3

The chronicle of the first twenty-four Generals ends in 1374. It was compiled by Arnold of Sarano, provincial of Aquitaine (c. 1373), much of it being written before 1369. He was a conventual and strong opponent of those who claimed to observe the Rule literally in his own time. He fortunately was not afraid of this heresy when it was removed the safe distance of a hundred years. "Since," he says, "the narration of things past is useful to instruct the present and warn the future, I have collected in the following volume notable things good and bad which happened in the holy Order of Friars Minor at various times under the different Ministers-General and which I have found scattered in legends, treatises (records), processes and chronicles, and also in the lives of saints, discovering the truth so far as I could." He is naturally fullest on his own province: but he has preserved a great deal of material even on the early years of the Order, which would otherwise have been lost. Unfortunately his references to authorities are of the vaguest: "quidum narrat," "alibi legitur." He had some curiously accurate information about details in the English province, which are not in Eccleston. He knew Eccleston's Chronicle (or some extracts?), but when we find him applying to Alexander of Hales a story which Eccleston tells of Adam of Oxford we feel some doubt about statements which cannot be checked elsewhere. He had no critical instinct, and seems to have acted on the principle that the more miraculous a story was the more

¹ Peregrini de Bononia Chronicon Abbreviatum de successione Ministrorum Generalium, printed in *Eccleston*, ed. Little (see p. 86 above), pp. 141-145.

² Printed in Analecta Franciscana, III (Quaracchi, 1897), pp. 693-707, and Holder-Egger's Salimbene, pp. 653-677.

³ Chronica XXIV Generalium ordinis minorum, Analecta Franciscana, III (Quaracchi, 1897), pp. 1-575.

worthy it was to be recorded. He sometimes hesitates about a date—never about a miracle.

A far more careful and accurate worker was Bartholomew of Pisa, but the De conformitate vitae B. Francisci ad Vitam Domini Fesu 1 is not a chronicle. It represents, however, an idea that was present in the minds of many Franciscans—that their Order stood at the beginning of a new epoch in the world's history—an idea which was connected with the real and spurious writings of Joachim of Fiore. Joachim influenced Franciscan views of history and its relations to Scripture in many ways. A very curious instance is afforded by the historical interpretation of the Apocalypse by Friar Alexander, a Franciscan of the custody of Bremen, about 1240.2 The idea came to him in a sudden flash after much cogitation, that the Book of Revelation was a prophetic history of the Church in chronological order: the early chapters dealing with the first centuries, the last with the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and he worked out the theory at great length. As he approaches his own time his illustrations become more and more local, and he gives long quotations from contemporary chronicles, introducing them with some vague phrase, such as "historia dicit." Among his chief authorities is the chronicle of his contemporary and near neighbour, Albert of Stade. Albert was abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Stade who, after vainly endeavouring to turn his abbey into a Cistercian house, joined the Franciscans at Stade in 1240. In the same year he was writing his chronicle (which he continued later)—the first general chronicle written by a Franciscan. Albert's chronicle exists only in a mutilated version known as the Annales Stadenses,3 which even in their present form are of considerable value.

¹ Analecta Franciscana, IV (1906) and V (1912).

² Since the late J. P. Gilson's article, "Friar Alexander and his Historical Interpretation of the Apocalypse," appeared in Collectanea Franciscana, II (Brit. Soc. of Franciscan Studies, X, 1922), pp. 20-36, this work had attracted a good deal of attention: several other MSS. have been found and several studies published: see Fr. Bihl's article in Arch. Franc. Hist. XXII (1929), pp. 195-200. A somewhat analogous use of the Apocalypse will be found in the Compendium sensus literalis Scripturae of Fr. Petrus Aureoli (ed. P. Seeboeck, O.F.M., Quaracchi, 1896): cf. Hist. Lit. de France, XXXIII, 513.

³ Mon. Germ. Hist. Script. XVI, pp. 283-378.

What parts of the chronicle have been omitted in the Annals is at present not known. One would expect to find a good deal on the Cistercians and the Franciscans, but there is very little in the Annals. On the other hand, Alexander's Historical Interpretation of the Apocalypse contains many passages on both Orders which have not been found elsewhere and may come from Albert. How far can one reconstruct Albert's original chronicle from the work of Alexander?

The Franciscans of the thirteenth century did not shine as general chroniclers. Albert's chronicle (which has merits) cannot be taken as a fair specimen, being the work of a man who entered the Order late in life. The next general chronicle by a Friar Minor is that by the anonymous friar of Erfurt —written about 1260—a miserable production, which has all the faults and none of the virtues of a universal history. Some fine universal chronicles emanated from the Franciscan Order in the fourteenth century, such as those of Paulino of Venice, 2 but the Franciscan historians found subjects better suited to their special talents and to their attitude towards life in shorter periods and smaller areas. Two good examples are the Chronicle of John of Winterthur and the so-called Lanercost Chronicle.

John of Winterthur's Chronicle 3 begins with Frederick II and ends in 1348. In his preface he says: "Since accurate knowledge and faithful account of the past are of great value to succeeding generations, I, John of Winterthur, the least of the Lesser Brethren have decided to note, in however uncouth a style—since I have no skill in fine writing—things that happened in my own time and a little before—not always in chronological order but as they occurred to me—sometimes summarily, sometimes at greater length. The earlier part of the work I have

¹ Chronica minor auctore Minorita Erphordiensi, ed. Holder-Egger, Mon. Germ. Hist. Script. XXIV, 178-213.

² Two chronicles, not fully printed: (1) Satyrica gestarum rerum, printed (in part) in Muratori, Antiquitates italicae, IV, col. 949-1034 (Milan 1741), under the name of Giordano; (2) Chronologia magna: see Golubovich, Biblioteca... della Terra Santa, II, 83-101.

³ Die Chronik Johanns von Winterthur, or Chronica Iohannis Vitodurani, ed. F. Baethgen and C. Brun, Mon. Germ. Hist. Script. Rerum Germanicarum, Nova Ser., tome iii, 1924.

compiled partly from chronicles I have read, partly from information which people have given me. In the later part I will describe carefully what I myself have seen or heard, or what I have learnt from common report." He has a remarkable historical instinct: he feels the bearing of local events on general history: he abandons the practice of separating ecclesiastical and political affairs, and treats them "mixtim": he has the gift of selecting stories which illustrate character, popular opinion, and his own standpoint. As an example we may take a passage on the Emperor Frederick II: "There is a story that when he was passing with his army a rich cornfield near the Rhine he said (alluding to the Holy Sacrament): 'What a lot of Gods will be soon made out of this corn!' Some also say that he ate sparingly all the year round, not as a penance with an eye on divine punishment, but to keep his bodily health. It is said further that he often took baths on Sunday. This shows that he held in contempt the commandments of God, holy days, and the sacraments of the Church." Friar John shows independence of judgment. He denounces the measures taken to suppress the Templars, and he has more than one good word to say of an anti-pope.

John of Winterthur's preface might supply the place of the lost preface of the Lanercost Chronicle: 1 it exactly describes the method of the author of that chronicle.

I have shown elsewhere ² that the original of the Lanercost Chronicle existed at the Grey Friars, London, about 1500, and was known as the Chronicle of Friar Richard of Durham. It is in form a continuation of the Chronicle of Roger of Hoveden from 1200 to 1346. The existing version is not the original: it has been revised, and additions and omissions have been made. But apart from interpolations it is clear that the chronicle was the work of two hands; the first from 1200 to 1297, the second from 1298 to 1346. The first hand is probably that of Richard of Durham: he was a Franciscan belonging to the

¹ Chronicon de Lanercost, ed. J. Stevenson, Edinburgh, 1839 (part translated by Sir H. Maxwell, The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272-1346, Glasgow, 1913).

² Eng. Hist. Review, XXXI (1916), p. 269; XXXII (1917), p. 48.

northern Custody of Newcastle, and seems to have resided at all the houses in that Custody, especially Berwick. He was old enough in 1257 to observe the effects of the famine in that year. He was an enthusiastic admirer of Simon de Montfort, and a vigorous hater of the Scots. He began writing his history about 1280, and the Scottish war and consequent disasters to Berwick put an end to his literary activity. been to Oxford, whether as a student or not is not clear. his intimate knowledge of the secret history of the foundation of Balliol College, one is tempted to identify Fr. Richard of Durham with Fr. Richard of Sleckburn who was employed by Devorguila in making arrangements for the new college, c. 1284. Sleckburn, though in Northumberland, was part of the principality of Durham; and Fr. Richard of Sleckburn, himself a writer of "exempla," was alive—and living at Salisbury in 1303. The first author of the Lanercost Chronicle was essentially a preacher, and interspersed his narrative with many stories suitable for use in the pulpit. He is discursive, and enlarges on the things which interest him without much regard for their historical importance. He is better at giving the atmosphere, contemporary feeling, than facts or logical sequence. Events are attributed directly to the will of God: disasters are the punishment for sins; the disasters which befel Berwick in 1296 are represented as a punishment for the Town Council withdrawing or reducing the contribution it had made for some years towards the support of the Friars Minor. The second author is content with prosaic and proximate causes: the north of England in 1314 suffered from Scottish invaders because it had neglected to pay the stipulated tribute. The second author resembles the first only in being a Franciscan and a patriotic hater of the Scots. Otherwise he is quite different—in his personality, style and conception of history. In this part documents take the place of exempla. The author makes very few references to himself. It is evident that he took much interest in siege implements and siege operations, and the description of the battle of Neville's Cross, with which the chronicle ends, is full of fire and patriotic enthusiasm. Was this part the real Chronicle of Thomas of Otterbourne? The Lanercost Chronicle presents

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many problems of historical criticism.¹ What exactly was contributed by the canons of Lanercost? I suspect that all the Lanercost interpolations came from the note-books of Henry de Burgh, prior of Lanercost, who died in 1315. A new and critical edition is much to be desired.

Turning now to the Dominicans, we find them more interested in the compilation of universal histories than in recording their own experiences on the history of their Order. They take on the whole a wider but more conventional view. They rely more on written authorities, less on their own observation and impressions. Gerard of Fracheto entered the Dominican Order at Paris, 1225, and held many offices in the Order, especially that of Provincial of Provence between that date and his death in 1271. In 1256 the General Chapter ordered the friars to send to the Master anything worthy of memory which they knew on the history of the Order: the Master commissioned Gerard to arrange the materials thus sent in, and the result was the first version of the Vitae Fratrum, which was approved by the General Chapter of 1260. Gerard also wrote a short chronicle of the Order. It covers the years 1203 to 1254, with some additions in 1258. In the early part he follows Jordan's life of St. Dominic, the latter part is based largely on the materials supplied for the Vitae Fratrum and on the records of the Order. In neither of his books does Gerard show any interest in or appreciation of the value of the history of institutions—a serious weakness in a historian of the Dominican Order.

Before this the Dominicans had appeared as compilers of general histories. The *Speculum* of Vincent of Beauvais ³ was the greatest of the works compiled by groups of members of the Order collaborating together: other co-operative works were the revision of the text of the *Vulgate* and the Biblical concordances. The *Speculum* was an encyclopedia of all sciences—natural science, theology and history. The historical part of it or *Speculum Historiale* makes no profession of being an original

¹ Cf. The Anonimalle Chronicle, 1333-1381, ed. by V. H. Galbraith, Manchester, 1927, pp. xxiv seq. ² See p. 85, note 2 above.

³ Edited by the Benedictines of Saint Vast d'Arras, Douai, 1624, in 4 vols. folio, under the title *Bibliotheca Mundi*.

production: it is a history of the world told in extracts from a vast number of recognised authorities, with a few lines inserted where necessary to link the extracts together. Recent history is not given at disproportionate length, and even here the original matter is very small. The first edition seems to have been completed in 1244, the second in 1254. The general editor, Vincent of Beauvais, a Dominican, was "lector" to Louis IX, and had access to the great collection of MSS. in the royal library. Like most editors he had difficulties in controlling his contributors and in co-ordinating their results. He regrets that too much legendary matter had crept in: and there is a certain amount of repetition. The work served as a store-house for later compilers and saved them from the trouble of consulting the originals.

The Speculum Historiale was long and not easily consulted. There was a demand for short chronological historical handbooks. One which was partly based on Vincent of Beauvais and which achieved enormous popularity was the Chronicle or Catalogue of Popes and Emperors by Martin of Troppau, often called the Pole, a Dominican of Prague. Its object was strictly utilitarian. "Since," he says, "it is very useful for theologians and jurists to know the dates of popes and emperors, I have compiled this work from diverse chronicles, arranged in chronological order from the first pope Jesus Christ and Augustus (the first emperor) to Clement IV." The principle was to give popes and emperors on opposite pages and leave one line for each year. There were precedents for this mechanical arrangement. The first edition was completed about 1268, the second in 1277. It is a useful list of dates and has the merit of brevity. But it contains grossly unhistorical statements, and the selection of facts (or fictions) does not give a high idea of the intelligence of the compiler. It was this work which popularised the fable of the female pope—a story apparently invented in Germany about the middle of the thirteenth century and already found in the Franciscan chronicler of Erfurt about 1260.

Nicholas Trevet was the most famous of the English

¹ Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum, ed. by Weiland in Mon. Germ. Hist. Script. XXII, 377-475.

Dominican chroniclers: his Annals of the Angevin Kings of England 1 covers the period from 1136 to 1307. He was the son of Thomas Trevet, knight, of Somerset, who is frequently mentioned in the Public Records between 1255 and 1278, generally as justice in eyre. Nicholas belonged to and was in touch with the administrative class. The traditional dates of Nicholas' birth and death are 1258 and 1328, and these are probably fairly correct. In one of his works, dedicated to John of Lenham, the king's confessor, he states that he had some time previously passed his forty-ninth year. John of Lenham was confessor to Edward II in 1311-1313: this would suggest that Trevet was born not later than 1260. Another work—the Latin edition of a brief chronicle from the creation of the world to Pope John XXII, the French version of which was written for the instruction of Princess Mary, nun of Amesbury-is dedicated to Hugh of Angoulême, Archdeacon of Canterbury and papal nuncio: Hugh held these offices in 1328. The one fixed date in his career is 1314-1315, when he was (for a second time) regent master of the Dominican Schools at Oxford. It is, however, possible to fix the date of the composition of the Annals with some accuracy from a somewhat obscure passage in the prologue. After referring to the practice of writing patriotic histories among the Greeks and Romans and other peoples, Nicholas continues: "This practice, born of the love of their own honour which is natural to all men, was observed in the English nation down to the accession of King John: but we now see it disregarded, either owing to the prevalent idleness which shirks the exercise of every kind of labour, or owing to viciousness which makes people hate their princes and delight rather in abusing than in praising them. Hence it is that the history of 120 years and more, extracted by the very slight diligence of chroniclers, in the scandalous gossip of the moderns, is disgracefully blackened by detractions of preceding kings, while foreign customs are extolled to the skies."

¹ F. Nicholai Triveti Annales Sex Regum Angliae, ed. T. Hog, English Hist. Soc., 1845. (On his life and writings see Cardinal Ehrle's article, "F. Nicolaus Trivet, sein Leben, seine Quolibet und Quaestiones ordinariae" in Festgabe Clemens Baeumker, Münster, 1923.)

"120 years and more" from the accession of John would place the date of the composition of the Annals at about 1320, and this conclusion is supported by other indications in the work: thus Thomas of Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford, who was canonised in 1320 is called "beatus" (p. 305), while Thomas Aquinas, who was canonised in 1323, is simply "frater" (p. 287).

The passage above quoted throws light on Trevet's point of view. He was a patriot and identified patriotism with devotion to the ruling house. Even King John he hopes may be numbered "inter beatos." Some of his additions to previous writers are calculated to put his heroes—especially Edward I—in a more favourable light. Thus in his account of the battle of Evesham he states that Edward provided for the honourable burial of the fallen, but makes no allusion to the mutilation of the body of Simon de Montfort (p. 266). In the crisis of 1297 he notes that those who were summoned to serve in Gascony were to receive wages from the king (p. 355). But he is truthful and accurate and objective, rarely obtruding his own sentiments. He has an eye to character and sometimes gives vivid descriptions of individuals.

It is difficult to estimate how far he is an independent authority. In his prologue he says that while he was at the University of Paris he read French and Norman chronicles and made excerpts of anything relating to England. From these, with what he had seen in English chronicles and what he had of his own knowledge or had learnt from trustworthy persons to supply omissions, he had compiled his Annals. But he very rarely states his authority. He used Martin of Troppau regularly for the history of the popes and some foreign affairs: thus the interesting account of the heresies and condemnation of Amaury at Paris in 1215 is taken word for word from Martin. He also drew occasionally from Vincent of Beauvais. The history from 1136 to 1199 is taken from William of Newburgh, Robert de Monte, Diceto and the Itinerarium Regis Ricardi: Trevet summarises these writers, using their words. From 1199 to 1286, though he makes use of Roger of Wendover, Matthew Paris, the Flores Historiarum, and others, he is more independent: and I have often failed to find his authorities. There is, of course, a close

resemblance between Trevet and the St. Albans Chronicle, attributed to Rishanger (1259-1306): but in this case Trevet is the original, Rishanger the copy. For the last twenty years of Edward I's reign the basis of the Annals is the Chronicle of Walter of Hemingburgh: Nicholas in the summary which he gives corrects some of Walter's mistakes and shows a wholesome scepticism as to enormous numbers of Scots slain in various battles. Nicholas is well informed on ecclesiastical matters and gives valuable information about the Dominicans, but there is no attempt to weave a history of the Dominican province into the chronicle. Some of his statements about his Order seem to have been derived directly from the short Chronicle of Gerard de Fracheto, but he gives a good deal of information about the early history of the Dominicans in England derived from sources now lost.

The greatest of Dominican historians is Bernard Gui, to whom is due the preservation of the magificent series of Acts of the early General Chapters and of the Provincial Chapters of Provence and Toulouse. Better known for his remarkable handbook on the procedure of the courts of the Inquisition (c. 1323),1 he was also a voluminous writer of histories. Born in 1261-1262, Bernard made his profession at Limoges in 1280, held office as lector and prior in various convents in the province of Provence, was inquisitor of Toulouse, 1307-1323, and died as Bishop of Lodève in 1331. He wrote (among other things): (1) Flores Chronicorum or a catalogue of the popes—a universal history from the birth of Christ to his own times: the first edition ends in 1301, but he was constantly revising and continuing it to 1331;2 (2) an abbreviated chronicle of popes and emperors; (3) a chronicle of the Kings of France, two or more versions; 3 (4) a series of works on the history of the Dominican Order: these include (besides lists of provinces and convents, writers and doctors of theology, acts of general and provincial chapters,

¹ Bernard Gui, Manuel de l'inquisiteur, éd. et traduit par G. Mollat, 2 vols., 1926-1927. (Les classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Âge, L. Halphen.)

² Muratori, Antiq. ital. III, 351-684: Bouquet, Recueil des historiens de France, XXI, 691-734.

³ Extracts in Bouquet, Recueil, XI, XII, XXI.

etc.), histories of the convents in the provinces of Provence and Toulouse.1 These local histories are in each case grouped round the list of priors; they contain notes on schools, buildings, benefactors, and relations to the outside world. As might be expected from the locality and from Bernard's life, the work of the inquisitors and the popular risings against them—the "rabies hominum impiorum"—occupy a large space. In his historical works he does not often (except when dealing with heretics) obtrude his own opinions but lets the facts speak for themselves. Occasionally he pronounces a moral judgment: the capture of Boniface VIII was a crime, but his fate is a warning to great prelates not to lord it over clergy and people. His works show a true appreciation of the value of diplomatic documents, considerable critical power ("excerpens ex libris maxime originalibus quantumcumque eos potui reperire "), and a real passion for historical research, especially in the matter of establishing correct dates.

There is no complete edition of his works. Parts of various works have been printed in different collections and archæological journals. The Dominican Order, which has of late taken a renewed interest in its history, might do worse than edit the works of the greatest, most prolific and most conscientious of its mediæval historians.

The chronicles of the two Orders are distinguished from each other in method and temperament: if you want to know what happened, the Dominicans will be the safest guides: if you want to know how it struck a contemporary—the beliefs and feelings of the men of the time, consult the Franciscans.

A. G. LITTLE.

¹ Many of these histories of convents have been published in French archæological journals; see A. Molinier, Les Sources de l'histoire de France, III, pp. 80-81 (No. 2511).

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